The King's Garden

or

The Life of the World to Come

W. M. L. Jay.

THE KING'S GARDEN

OR

THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME

COMPILED BY

W. M. L. JAY

My Father's house on high,
Home of my soul, how dear,
At times, to faith's foreseeing eye,
Thy golden gates appear!

Montgomery

NEW YORK
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY
31 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET
1902

108092
237 Q
W8C

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Published, November, 1902

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

PREFACE

In all ages the human imagination has delighted itself in picturing a future state of happiness. This fact is a sufficient warrant for such a use of the imagination. Nor is its force lessened by the consideration that these pictures bear the impress of the age and people that originate them. Crude and materialistic as they have been at times, they have one suggestive characteristic,—they all predict a state of existence better and brighter than the present one, and growing naturally out of it,—a characteristic that endures through all the changing phases of both paganism and Christianity. The modern Christian imagination differs from the ancient one chiefly in its greater tenderness and confidence,—a legitimate outgrowth from that clearer idea of the Fatherhood of God which is a marked feature of the religious thought of our day. It makes Paradise the home-land of the soul, and this life a continuous home-stretch. If it be objected that this home-land is but a rose-colored reproduction of life on the earth, perhaps the best answer may be given in the words of St. Paul: "*The invisible things* of Him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen, *being understood by the things that are made.*" It is but the reasoning

from the known to the unknown which is the very foundation stone of all sound thought and progressive action. It is the true ideal, beautiful and helpful because it grows out of and carries onward and upward a known real. Ruskin has well said: "All the paradises imagined by the religious painters [and, we may surely add, writers] are true ideals; and so far from having dwelt on them too much, I believe, rather, we have not trusted them enough, as possible statements of precious truth."

To bring together, for our enlightenment, comfort, and inspiration, as many as possible of these pictures of the imagination, combined with more authoritative statements, comments, and conclusions solidly founded on Holy Scripture, is the object of this book. In matters where all must be, not mere conjecture, to be sure, but individual interpretations or elaborations of Scriptural hints,—assertions of possibilities, not of absolute facts,—I have thought it right to admit whatever was sincere and reverent, if suited to the aim and scope of the work. It follows that there are some slight contradictions in minor details; they are due to the several facets of the human mind, reflecting light at different angles: readers can discriminate for themselves. The wonder is not that there are a few divergences, but rather that the general trend of thought is so harmonious.

When I began to arrange the selections, I was pleasantly surprised to find how often they fitted each other as perfectly as if emanating from one mind and written by one hand. To preserve this oneness, and to avoid the fragmentary appearance

and effect always given by isolated paragraphs, I adopted the plan of putting the authors' names at the foot of the page, where they do not necessarily break the continuity of thought, yet are easily referred to.

If my work results in making the King's Garden, the many mansions, seem nearer, dearer, more delightsome, more truly a "desired haven," it will have gained all that it hoped for, and more than it dared to expect.

W. M. L. Jay.

New York, November, 1902.

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Equally sincere thanks are due to the many authors and publishers who have unwittingly contributed to the aggregate of excellence and suggestiveness, but whose individual contributions have not seemed voluminous enough to require formal permission for their use.

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Forewords: in Many Voices

THERE is in the minds of men a presage of a future existence, and it takes deepest root, and is most discoverable, in the greatest and most exalted souls.—CICERO.

I have always thought that faith in immortality was a proof of the sanity of a man's nature.—EMERSON.

> The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
> In that which perishes; nor will he lend
> His heart to that which doth on time depend.
>
> MICHAEL ANGELO.

My mind can take no hold on the present world, nor rest in it for a moment; but my whole being rushes on with irresistible force towards a future and better state of being.—FICHTE.

Those who hope for no other life are dead even for this.—GOETHE.

My defects make me but too well aware of it,—man but half lives during this life, and the life of the soul begins with the death of the body.—JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

The *summum bonum*, then, practically is only possible on the supposition of the immortality of the soul; con-

sequently, this immortality, being inseparably connected with the moral law, is the postulate of pure practical reason, by which I mean a theoretical proposition, not demonstrable as such, but which is an inseparable result of an unconditional *a priori* practical law.—KANT.

All the hours of life work together towards that flowering-time which we call death.—AMIEL.

The more thoroughly we comprehend the process of evolution by which things have come to be what they are, the more we are likely to feel that to deny the everlasting persistence of the spiritual element in man is to rob the whole process of its meaning.—JOHN FISKE.

Death's truer name
Is Onward: no discordance in the roll
And march of that eternal harmony
Whereto the worlds beat time.

TENNYSON.

Can we believe that the soul, . . . whose nature is so glorious and pure and invisible, is blown away by the wind and perishes as soon as she leaves the body, as the world says? Nay, dear Cebes and Simmias, it is not so?—SOCRATES: PLATO'S *Phædo*.

The Power that gave me existence is able to continue it in any form that He pleases, with or without the body. —THOMAS PAINE.

Still seems it strange that thou shouldst live for ever?
Is it less strange that thou shouldst live at all?
This is a miracle, and that no more.

YOUNG.

We! what do we see?—each a space
Of some few yards before his face;
Does that the whole wide plan explain?
Ah, yet consider it again.

ARTHUR CLOUGH.

The soul, departing from the body, does but begin to live.—SCIPIO.

We see all sights from pole to pole,
And glance and nod, and hurry by,
And never once possess our soul
Until we die.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The soul is a substance. Now, no substance can wholly perish without actual annihilation, which would be a miracle. . . . Therefore the soul is naturally immortal.—LEIBNITZ.

For aught we know of ourselves, of our present life and of death, death may immediately, in the natural course of things, put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life, as our birth does.—BISHOP BUTLER.

Man is not completely born until he has passed through death.—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Immortality is not a doctrine of Christianity alone. It belongs to the whole human race.—THEODORE PARKER.

There must be an external fact to which all this internal movement belongs. Where all the needles turn there must be a pole.—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

He who keeps faith with His humbler creatures, who gives to the bee and the dormouse the winter for which they prepare, will not break faith with men.—HUGH MILLER.

Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,
We burst there as the worm into the fly,
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings.
ROBERT BROWNING.

Death . . . is a vigorous outburst of a new life, not a resting on a clay pillow from the toil of this.—FABER.

When I go down to the grave, I can say, like so many others, "I have finished my day's work," but I cannot say, "I have finished my life." . . . My work will begin again next morning.—VICTOR HUGO.

We must step boldly through the night, with our eyes fixed on the morning.—KNOX-LITTLE.

I feel my immortality o'ersweep all pains, all tears, all time.—BYRON.

The voice of nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies.
ROBERT BURNS.

There is no death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but the suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call death.
LONGFELLOW.

I swear I think there is nothing but immortality! . . . And all preparation is for it! and identity is for it! and life and materials are altogether for it!

WALT WHITMAN.

As life that is, is from all life before;
So life that is, is life for evermore:
Of life, the whole, a part is all we know;
From life, a part, to life, the whole, we go.

W. H. PLATT.

Death, in short, under the Christian aspect, is but God's method of colonization,—the transition from this mother-country of ours to the fairer and newer world of our emigration.—DR. JAMES MARTINEAU.

Who knows what myriad colonies there are
Of fairest fields and rich, undreamed-of gains,
Thick-planted in the distant, shining plains
Which we call "sky" because they lie so far?
Oh, write of me not "Died in bitter pains,"
But "Emigrated to another star."

HELEN HUNT JACKSON.

Sending the Heart Before

The wise do send their hearts before them to dear, blessed Heaven, despite the veil between.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

Since I am coming to that holy room,
Where with the choir of saints for evermore
I shall be made Thy music, as I come
I tune the instrument here at the door,
And what I must do then think here before.

JOHN DONNE.

The man who in his mind and thought never travelled to heaven is no artist. When the sun rises I see, not a round disk of fire, but an innumerable company of the heavenly host, crying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty!"

WILLIAM BLAKE.

Eternity, which cannot be far off, is my one strong city. I look into it fixedly now and then.

T. CARLYLE.

I never spoke with God,
Nor visited in Heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot,
As if the chart were given.

EMILY DICKINSON.

I

YOU are all justified in believing that such a globe as this,—full of lessons and covered with sunbeams, full of love and thought,— is not simply a place in which Christ may die, but a place from which His soul arises; you are justified in asking all the flowers of all the fields, and the spring sunbeams that make them, to assure you that under you and all whom you love flows the power of an endless life.[1]

To that future of futures, which shall fulfil the yearnings for all that the Prophets have desired on earth, it is for us, wherever we are, to look onward, upward, and forward, in the constant expectation of something better than we see or know.[2]

We must learn to realize the City and its citizens, the society, the company, in which our true life is thrown; giving some time, quietly and calmly, to take in these unseen realities, so as to gain a truer apprehension of the world invisible. To us, in this present world, it is invisible; and yet, in one sense, it is as present as this visible world. It is a real world, now going on, into which any of us may, any day, be called upon to enter. It is around us now. The majority of men are there already; and most of us will be there before fifty years are over.[3]

[1] David Swing. [2] Arthur Penrhyn Stanley. [3] Bishop Webb.

There is no reason why we should dread the transit. Its hardships are not likely to be more numerous than those which are incidental to many an earthly journey that is undertaken with eagerness, and prosecuted with courage and fortitude. In many cases it will be short;—happy they who in the midst of an active life *here* are bidden to enter upon the fuller life *there*. All that is to be anywise dreaded,—the pains of sickness, the weariness of debility, the humiliation of helplessness,—all these are at this end of the journey; at the other, all is health, growth, fruition.[1]

Think what it will be to us—creatures of sense, children of time, victims of custom, slaves of habit—to live in conditions where these are utterly swept away! . . . How stimulating, how consoling, how elevating, to feel that what is good and blessed and true—high and tender affections, noble resolves, holy purposes,—that these will have their true power in an eternal future, and that that future is ours!

In proportion as we throw ourselves forward into that future, so our capacity for all that is most worthy enlarges. To live with an eye on the future is to make the present rich in action, and to free it from the paralyzing effects of cowardice or fear. The human soul, exiled from its natural home, must lift its eyes above the mountains and see the morning dawn.[2]

This present, unless we see gleaming beyond it the eternal calm of the heavens above the tossing tree-tops with withering leaves, and the smoky

[1] John Worden. [2] W. J. Knox-Little.

chimneys, is a poor thing for our eyes to gaze at, or our hearts to love, or our hands to toil on. But when we see that all paths lead to heaven, and that our eternity is affected by our acts in time, then it is blessed to gaze; it is possible to love the earthly shadows of the uncreated beauty; it is worth while to work. . . . The one thing which saves this life from being contemptible is the thought of another. The more profoundly we feel the reality of the great eternity whither we are being drawn, the greater all things here become. They are made less in their power to absorb or to trouble, but they are made infinitely greater in importance as preparations for what is beyond. When they are first, they are small; when they are second, they are great. When the mist lifts, and shows the snowy summits of the "mountains of God," the nearer, lower ranges which we thought the highest dwindle indeed, but gain in sublimity and meaning by the loftier peaks to which they lead up.[1]

The future is lighted for us with the radiant colors of hope. Strife and sorrow shall disappear. Peace and love shall reign supreme. The dream of poets, the lesson of priest and prophet, the inspiration of the great musician, is confirmed in the light of modern knowledge; and as we gird ourselves up for the work of life, we may look forward to the time when in the truest sense the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of Christ.[2]

In the light which streams from the Person and Life of Christ, we may see with the eye of faith that

[1] Alexander Maclaren. [2] John Fiske.

death need not mean the loss, but only the transference of energy; that what seems outwardly to be an abrupt ending of the activities of the soul as well as of the body may well be rather the transference of those activities to another sphere of being in the unseen world, to which, if they have come under the wonder-working power of Christ's life, they have already in their inner reality belonged; so that what in itself, in so far as it belongs to this lower world, is transient and failing and dying away, is but preparing for and leading up to that which is permanent and undying in the world to come.

First, that which is natural, afterward, that which is spiritual, and the one leading to the other.[1]

Without the spiritual, observe
The natural 's impossible; no form,
No motion! Without sensuous, spiritual
Is inappreciable,—no beauty or power!
And in this twofold sphere the twofold man
Holds firmly by the natural, to reach
The spiritual beyond it, fixes still
The type with mortal vision, to pierce through
With eyes immortal to the antetype
Some call the ideal—better called the real,
And certain to be called so presently,
When things shall have their names.[2]

It was a Man,—one whom we know, one whom we understand and love, one who is everything to us, one whose humanity is all the more dear and true because He is vastly more than man,—it was a

[1] J. W. Hicks. [2] Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Man like this who passed into the heavens and made the heavens for ever intelligible and sweet to us. . . . If on some hitherto unexplored and uninhabited island far away in the seas a man goes to live, whoever he may be,—the poorest and least interesting of our race,—he clothes the island with intelligibleness. I can understand and realize its existence when I know that a human foot has been pressed upon its sandy beach. If he is a great, strong, notably manly man who goes there, carrying with him a large share of our humanity, then he gives the island more than intelligibleness, he gives it dignity. It is full of interest. We all want to hear what he is doing in that now much-regarded land. But if the man who goes there is my friend, and if before he goes he tells me that ultimately the island is to be his and mine, that he is going to make it ready for my coming, that he will come back again and take me to it by-and-by, then how that island burns for me the one live, real, shining spot in all the world! It is the goal of all my thoughts, the loadstone of my hopes. I think of it until the familiar house in which I was born, and where I am living still, seems strange to me compared with that one shining spot that has become so real. My friend's love makes it glow and burn before me as if I myself already saw the sun shining on its mountain-tops and flashing on the surface of its rippling streams.[1]

Over the silver mountains,
Where sparkle the nectar fountains,

[1] Phillips Brooks.

There will I kiss
The bowl and bliss,
And drink mine fill
Upon every milken hill!
My soul will be dry before,
But after that thirst no more.[1]

Life as we now know it is part of a whole which lies, in its completeness, beyond our vision. There is not enough in the greatest human career to develop and express all there is in man's nature; in the case of the most noble and masterful career nothing is accomplished beyond personal growth and a contribution to the growth of society. The most encouraging and consoling fact about life is that very incompletion which men are so often tempted to deplore. The real basis of hope is in the possibilities of growth which are inherent in every personality and in all society.[2]

All the comfort I have found teaches me to confide that I shall not have less in times and places that I do not yet know. I have known admirable persons, without feeling that they exhaust the possibilities of virtue and talent. I have seen glories of climate, of summer mornings and evenings, of midnight sky; I have enjoyed the benefits of all this complex machinery of arts and civilization, and its results of comfort. The Good Power can easily provide me millions more as good. All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen. Whatever it be which the great Providence prepares for

[1] Sir Walter Raleigh. [2] Hamilton Wright Mabie.

us, it must be something large and generous and in the great style of all His works.[1]

Souls alter not, and mine must still advance; . . .
I cannot chain my soul: it will not rest
In its clay prison, this most narrow sphere:
It has strange impulse, tendency, desire,
Which nowise I account for nor explain;
But cannot stifle, being bound to trust
All feelings equally, to hear all sides:
How can my life indulge them? yet they live,
Referring to some state of life unknown.[2]

Even in the realm of inorganic matter we find latent possibilities which man alone is able to develop,—music in inexhaustible profusion in the silent air, light and heat and motive power in that magnetic force which man has in our own times made subservient to his will. Man is thus found to be correlated to the unknown as well as the known. His spirit transcends the invisible, and by dream, by vision, by unquenchable hope, by the unceasing cry of the creature for the Creator, by aspiration after a perfection which is unattainable here, by the presence of evil, by the burden of sorrow and the unappeasable hunger of love, the spirit of man penetrates the veil which conceals the spiritual world, and feels with an instinct which no sophistry can destroy that there must be a meaning, a purpose, an end behind the mystery which now surrounds and baffles him.[3]

[1] Emerson. [2] Robert Browning. [3] Rev. Malcolm MacColl.

Yea, were those lives whose blading is so fair,
To find no other earing than in blight—
Swelling the waste-heap of a world's despair—
E'en love itself would darken into night;
For men, grown sick of shimmering lives that seem
The flutter of a gnat against the sky,
Would shoot no more their tissue with love's gleam,
And cruel live because they hopeless die.
But now the farther life the nearer lifts
Into great glory; and though clouds may roll,
The heart grows quick to love; for through the rifts
It glimpses love eternal as its goal.[1]

Suppose a human soul looking out into the mysterious and unrevealed experiences of the everlasting world. The window of death is wide open, and the shivering soul stands up before it and looks through and sees eternity. No wonder that it trembles. The warm, bright, familiar room of earthly life, where it has dwelt so long, lies there behind it; and before it, outside the window, the vast, dim, pathless, unknown world of immortality. How shall the soul carry with it the sense of safety and assurance in God, which it has won within His earthly care, forth into this unknown, untrodden vastness whither it now must go? Only in one way; only by deepening as deeply as possible its assurance that it is God,—not accident, not its own ingenuity, not its brethren's kindness,—that it is God who has made this earthly life so rich and happy. God is too vast, too infinite, for earth. He is too vast for time, and

[1] A. Eubule Evans.

needs eternity. Wrapped into Him the soul may be not merely resigned; it may be even impatient to explore those larger regions where the Power which has made itself known to it here shall be able to display to it all the completeness of its nature and its love. As the child of the sailor may wish to go to sea that he may see the father in whom he believes do his supreme work in fighting with the midnight hurricane; as the child of the soldier may wish to see his father on the battle-field; and the child of the statesman may wish to see his father in the Senate; so the child of God may wish for eternity, sure that there upon the vaster fields he shall see vaster exhibitions of that power and grace which he has learned completely to believe in here.[1]

If I have loved the forest and the field,
Can I not love them better, deeper there?
If all that power hath made to me doth yield
Something of good and beauty, something fair,—
Freed from the grossness of mortality,
May I not love them all, and better all enjoy?[2]

What a beautiful world this is in which we live this May day, so full of sunshine and song! But think!—this is the prison, what will the palace be? This is the ocean steamer, what will the home be? This is the wilderness, what will the land of promise be? If this is what God made for the schoolroom, I wonder what He has made for the home! Sometimes I wish I knew, but on the whole I am glad I do not. I am glad that, when the awaking comes, I shall awake to a glad surprise.[3]

[1] Phillips Brooks. [2] Robert Nicoll. [3] Lyman Abbott.

"Pass in, pass in," the angels say,
"Into the upper doors,
Nor count compartments of the floors,
But mount to Paradise
By the stairway of surprise." [1]

For, no matter how much and legitimately the imagination may delight itself in picturing the beauty and the joy of Paradise, it must necessarily use the materials with which earth has made it familiar, and no one need fear that the reality will not, in some form and measure, outdo the fancy.[2]

Oh, Paradise must fairer be
Than any spot below!
My spirit pines for liberty,
Now let me thither go!
In Paradise forever clear
The stream of love is flowing;
For every tear that I shed here
A pearl therein is glowing. . . .

My youth that fled so soon away,
And left me sad, decaying,
Shall there be with me every day,
With bright wings round me playing:
All hopes, all wishes, all the love
I sighed for, pined for ever,
Shall bloom around me there above,
And last with me for ever! [3]

[1] Emerson. [2] L. M. Wooster. [3] Friedrich Ruckert.

And when we reach there, we will know
The faces we knew of yore,
The lips we kissed, the hands we clasped,
When memory loosens its store; . . .

And all the joys we have missed, my love,
And all the hopes we knew,
The dreams of life that we dreamed in vain,
When youth's red blossoms blew;

And all the hearts that throbbed for us
In the past so sunny and fair,
We will meet and greet in that golden land,
Over the hills of care:

Over the mountains of sleep, my love,
Over the hills of dream,
Beyond the walls of care and fate,
Where the loves and memories teem.[1]

Nor is that sacred and unconquerable feeling—our love for the dead—to be considered as a machine gradually expending its power and force on nothing here till it finally expires, but as a vital force working in the interest of the future, and that for ever.[2]

We are too much accustomed to regard the spiritual world, when we think of it at all, as something unreal, shadowy, distant, with which we have nothing in common while in this world, and the inhabitants of which have lost all interest in us, as we too often have done in them. To suppose that those who have left us have ceased to interest themselves

[1] W. Wilfrid Campbell. [2] Lady Eastlake.

in us is to doubt if they remain human; whereas, they have become more intensely human than they ever were here.[1]

Why, then, may I not with distinct conceptions and joyful desires look after the souls of my departed friends, that are now in the Celestial Kingdom?[2]

A new sense of reality in the world beyond the grave comes to all of us when for the first time we can think of one who has been intimate in our interests as having gone there and sat down in the intimacy of its interests, which have been so foreign to us and so far away. Heaven has at once an association with us. We have a relation there. One name is known in its mysterious streets, and so its streets become less mysterious and remote to us. It is somewhat as when a mother in some little country village sends her boy to the great city, and at once feels familiar with the great city because somewhere, lost amid its hurrying thousands, her boy is there. She talks of it with a kind of affection, as if it were almost her home, because it is the home of one she loves. She catches every mention of it, as if it were a message meant for her. To go there is the constant dream of her life, and she feels as if when she came there she would know at once the streets in which her heart has had its home so long.

So when a dear friend dies and goes to heaven, heaven at once catches and naturalizes into itself our love for him. We read about it as if we knew it, and when we think of going there ourselves, we

[1] Robert Leighton. [2] Richard Baxter.

think of it as going home, because our heart has had its home there so long.[1]

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air,
Year after year her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.
Thus do we walk with her and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.[2]

Thou glorious spirit-land,—oh, that I could see thee as thou art,—the region of life and light and love, and the dwelling-place of those beloved ones whose being has flowed onward, like a silver-clear stream, into the bosom of the sounding main, into the ocean of eternity![3]

I must think of eternity as the home of my soul. I am on a journey. I am a pilgrim. I am travelling homewards. Home means rest, and kind friends, and a warm welcome. Think, in a far country, however much one loves it, there is something wanting. That is supplied in our own country. So I am to think of this world and eternity. However bright be the blessings of this life, still something is wanting. . . . Let me think of eternity as my country, my home.[4]

I love to think of heaven,—oh, so different from this earth, beautiful as it is! I love to dwell on the

[1] Phillips Brooks.
[2] Longfellow.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] W. J. Knox-Little.

splendors of that glorious city; I take the description, as given by St. John, in its literal sense; I have constantly before my eyes its golden streets and pearly gates, its crystal battlements, its spreading tree of life; I hear the rush of the silver waves of the water of life; I listen fondly to the angels' song as it is wafted to me from my future home; but above all I think of Jesus as the great attraction of the other world. Oh, how we long to cast our crowns before Him, to see with our own eyes His pierced hands and feet, to hear His gentle voice tell us how He loves us, how nothing shall separate us from Him! How we yearn to tell Him, too, somewhat of our gratitude, to show Him how we love Him in return. He is the centre of our worship, the light of our firmament, the last resting-place of our souls, the Being in whose presence there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.'

The hills around Jerusalem
  Stand dusky, lonely, pining;
We think how beautiful on them
  His feet will soon be shining!
The Sun of Righteousness will rise
  With wings of balmy healing,
With cheer for hearts and light for eyes
  That wait for His revealing.

For He!—but here the song grows faint,
  To sweeter silence fleeing;
What mortal strain hath power to paint
  The beauty of His being?

[1] Forbes E. Winslow.

And if our hearts so melt and thrill
With raptures of pre-vision,
What unimagined sweets shall fill
The cup of full fruition!

A true idea of the life to come will give a fresh interest to the life that now is. For instance: what interest does it give to the few moments in which the children of God are thrown together when we recollect that we may meet each other and recognize each other in the world to come! We may be with them only for a day, but we may be beginning an acquaintance that is to last for ever.[1]

If thou wilt be fearless of death, endeavor to be in love with the felicities of saints and angels, and to be once persuaded to believe that there is a condition of living better than this; that there are creatures more noble than we; that above there is a country better than ours; that the inhabitants know more and better, and are in places of rest and desire. . . . And death cannot be a formidable thing, which lets us into so much joy and felicity.[2]

My soul, there is a countrie
Afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentrie
All skilful in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet Peace sits crowned with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.

[1] Bishop Webb. [2] Jeremy Taylor.

He is thy gracious Friend,
And (O my soul, awake!)
Did in pure love descend
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flowre of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortresse and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges,
For none can thee secure
But One who never changes—
Thy God, thy Life, thy Cure.[1]

When I take a full view and circle of myself, without this reasonable moderator and equal piece of justice,—death,—I do conceive myself the miserablest person extant. Were there not another life that I hope for, all the vanities of the world should not entreat a moment's breath from me. Could the devil work my belief to imagine that I should never die, I would not outlive that very thought. I have so abject a conceit of this common way of existence, this retaining to the sun and the elements, I cannot think this is to be a man, or to live according to the dignity of humanity. In expectation of a better I can with patience embrace this life; yet in my best meditations do often defy death.[2]

Life is certain to become dull and uninteresting and weary to an old man, to every man as he grows old, unless some future life opens before him, which shall be to his old age all that the yet untried life

[1] H. Vaughan. [2] Sir Thomas Browne.

was to his boyish dreams,— . . . that opening of another future, with new uncertainties, which has turned many an old man into a child again as he stood at the gateway of the Everlasting Life. When this life is exhausted, when its crooked streets have all been trodden to the end, still the interest need not have gone out of living if only from the hilltop of experience new and untrodden ways can open themselves before us, rolling on into the mystery of eternity. Then one may die with as true vitality, as eager curiosity, as he has ever lived.[1]

Yea, there shalt thou find all that thou canst find, all that thou shalt be able to desire.

There shalt thou have within thy reach all good, without fear of losing it.

There I will give thee glory for the reproach which here thou sufferest, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.[2]

What is the glory? Will it be the glory of the well-developed intellectual life, when we shall know as we are known, apprehending truth not in its fragmentariness, but in its entireness? Will it be the glory of the moral life, where we can do what we now wish to do, but are not able to do? Will it be the glory of the spiritual life, where all the thoughts and feelings, by sweetest music stirred, shall come out into expression? . . . Will it be the glory of the fully developed social life, where the hindered fellowships and broken friendships shall all be gathered up and united? I do not know, you do not know; but something very bright and beautiful

[1] Phillips Brooks. [2] Thomas à Kempis.

will it be; singing, sounding in you now, as the "hope of glory in you."[1]

The dead have all the glory of the world:
Why will we live and not be glorious?
We never can be deathless till we die.[2]

Who, even that might, would dwell for ever pent
In this fair frame that doth the spirit inhearse,
Nor at the last grow weary, and content
Die, and break forth into the universe?[3]

I want to see the sky and the light! The sky and the light![4]

I would bathe
My soul in a serener atmosphere
Than this: I long to mingle with the flock
Led by the "living waters," and to stray
In the "green pastures" of the better land!
When wilt thou break, dull fetter? When shall I
Gather my wings, and like a rushing thought
Stretch onward, star by star, up into heaven![5]

Come, let us lag here no longer; let us be up and away!
Oh, for another world! Oh, if one could fly like a bird!
Oh, to escape, to sail forth, as in a ship!
To glide with thee, O Soul, o'er all, in all, like a ship o'er the waters![6]

[1] Rev. David H. Greer, D.D.
[2] Philip James Bailey.
[3] Jean Ingelow.
[4] From Tennyson's *Last Words*.
[5] N. P. Willis.
[6] Walt Whitman.

The Passing of the Soul

The door of death is made of gold
That mortal eyes cannot behold;
But when the mortal eyes are closed
And cold and pale the limbs reposed,
The soul awakes, and wondering sees
In her mild hand the golden keys.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

What a strange moment that will be,
My soul, how full of curiosity,
When, winged and ready for thy eternal flight,
On the utmost verge of thy tottering clay
Hovering, and wishing longer stay,
Thou shalt advance and have eternity in sight!
When just about to try that unknown sea,
What a strange moment that shall be!

JOHN NORRIS.

And the wind of the waters, the hush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current, and spotted with foam,
As it draws to the ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast,
As the pale waste widens around him,
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

II

THE progress of the departing spirit is imagined with an intense eagerness of conjecture. Does it open its eyes at once with sudden rapture or alarm on a scene of unutterable wonder? Does it awake as we awake from the sleep of night, so gently that the mind is conscious of no struggle, and scarcely of the change from activity to slumber, and from slumber to activity again? Does it carry on a continual thread of perception, and know at once the world which it has left and the world upon which it has entered? Does it find itself alone, or among companions? Does the separation from this earth become wider as it advances beyond the eternal hills? Can we attain to any conception of its sensations, its condition, or its prospects? . . . That there is an interval between earth and paradise, however brief to the disembodied spirit, is apparently told us by the passage of Lazarus from one state to another: "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." A natural supposition is here confirmed by the language of our Saviour. He speaks of transportation, and thus there must be transition.[1]

Yet it is scarcely to be supposed that the experi-

[1] Rt. Rev. George Burgess, D.D.

ences of all souls are alike in the transition from earth to paradise. The great variety in human characters and circumstances, as in all the works of God and the processes of nature, forbids such a supposition. The imagination, therefore, need not be confined to one event of journey or one kind of guide. If angels convey one soul to the goal, another may be met and carried by friends, and there may be some so buoyant with spiritual grace and power that of themselves, like the homing pigeon, they instinctively, with a fine and sure intelligence, make their short, swift way to the better country.[1]

The word of summons comes, and the soul leaps to answer it. The eternal life in us answers to the eternal life beyond the grave, recognizes it, flees to its own. There is no violence of transfer. It is a continuation of the one same life.[2]

As to the separation of body and soul, or, rather, your separation from the physical body, it is never felt, being too gentle. You go to sleep every night, but are never conscious of it.[3]

> Gently—so have good men taught—
> Gently and without grief the old shall glide
> Into the new. The eternal flow of things,
> Like the bright river of the fields of heaven,
> Shall journey onward in perpetual peace.[4]

[1] John Worden.
[2] Phillips Brooks.
[3] From *Behind the Veil.*
[4] William Cullen Bryant.

There is nothing in the experience of Peter and Stephen to persuade us that the spirit opens its eyes in eternity as with a shock of surprise, allied to alarm. The apostle was "caught up," without even knowing if he had left behind him his earthly tabernacle. If, as is probable, the soul in death feels the same transition, it is but the continuance of life in another scene and sphere as an unbroken thread passing gently up, though passing swiftly.[1]

Myself quitting myself,
The soul gathers its wings upon the edge
Of the new world, yet how assuredly!
Oh, how in balm I change! actively willed,
Yet passive quite; and feelings opposite mingle
In exquisite peace! These fleshly clothes,
Which late I thought myself, lie more and more
Apart from this warm, sweet, retreating Me,
Who am as a hand withdrawing from a glove.[2]

It seems much harder to the lookers-on
Than to the man who dies. Each panting breath,
We call a gasp, may be to him who knows
A sigh of pleasure; or, at worst, the sob
With which the unclothed spirit, step by step,
Walks forth into the cool, eternal sea.
I think, my boy, death has two sides to it,
One sunny and one dark; as this round earth
Is every day half sunny and half dark.
We on the dark side call the mystery death;
They, on the other, looking down in light,
Wait the glad birth, with other tears than ours.[3]

[1] Bishop Burgess. [2] Leigh Hunt. [3] George Macdonald.

While you see the sun descending,
  While you lose me in the night,
Lo! the heavenly morn is breaking,
  And my soul is in the light.

I from faith to sight am rising,
  While in deeps of doubt you sink;
'T is the glory that divides us,
  Not the darkness, as you think.'[1]

Death simply separates by a mysterious alchemy the mortal from the immortal, and it is a short journey from this world to the other. While we are saying our good-night to the dying, they are listening to a good-morning from those who have joined the majority. We suffer from a sense of separation, but they enjoy the pleasures of a reunion.[2]

There was but a moment . . . when my faint heart did fail me. It was but the failing of the flesh, the sudden suffocation when the heart doth cease to beat. Then I awoke, as it seemed, from sleep, feeling light and well, as if a burden had been cast from me.

"And didst thou feel that thou wert dead?" asked Martha.

Nay, I felt only a great rest and lightness, and that evil thoughts no more oppressed me; but for all else, I seemed to be yet myself. . . . Then a great joy filled mine heart, a joy to which no earthly joy can be compared,—the joy of rest and certainty which no man hath on earth. "Why, then, do men fear death?" I asked.

[1] Alice Cary. [2] Rev. George H. Hepworth.

And a voice near me whispered: "They fear what they know not. They believe in a life and death of their own thinking. They live in dreams of their own making and waken but to die."

And who art thou? I asked.

"I am the Spirit of Truth." . . .

Then he took me across the air, and over the trees and valleys. . . . Then I saw that other spirits came and went about us, and all looked peaceful and quiet, as though no longer troubled about aught below. And I knew no one face, but all seemed those of friends that had loved, and as they flitted past me, they cried out, "Welcome, welcome!" Then I saw that I was where there was no night nor day, only a strange glow of light; and of hours, of time, of sleep,—they were not.[1]

What was yet before
Neither I met nor turned from it away.
My only conscious being was the rest
Of torture dead, gone with the bygone day.
And long I could have lingered, all but blest
In that slow, dreamy pause. But came a sound
As of a door that opened,—in the west
Somewhere I thought it was. The noise unbound
The sleep from off my eyelids, and they rose
And I looked forth. And looking, straight I found
It was my chamber door that did unclose,
Whence a tall form up to my bedside drew,—
Grand, silent, bending almost with repose;

[1] Lucas Cleeve.

And when I saw his countenance I knew
That I was lying in my chamber dead;
For this my brother—brothers such are few—
That now to greet me bowed his kingly head,
Had many years agone, like holy dove
Returning, from his friends and kindred sped,
And, leaving memories of mournful love,
Passed vanishing behind the unseen veil. . . .
Now eager, up to meet him slow I bent,—
I, too, was dead, so might the dead embrace.
The dear, long-fingered hand silent he lent,
And lifted me. I was in feeble case,
But, growing stronger, stood upon the floor;
Then turned and once regarded my dead face
With curious eyes: its brow contentment bore,
But I had done with it. I turned away,
And seeing my brother by the open door,
Followed him out into the night blue-gray.[1]

And this is death! I understand it all.
New being waits me; new perceptions must
Be born in me before I plunge therein;
Which last is death's affair; and while I speak,
Minute by minute he is filling me
With power.[2]

Then said I to the Spirit: "I feel so strong, like to a young eagle; yet on earth I was ever weary and footsore!"

And he made answer: "It was the body chained thee. When the spirit is delivered from the body,

[1] George Macdonald. [2] Robert Browning.

at that moment it feels lifted up and is capable of all things." [1]

I went to sleep, and now I am refreshed,—
A strange refreshment; for I feel in me
An inexpressive lightness, and a sense
Of freedom, as I were at length myself,
And ne'er had been before.
How still it is!
I hear no more the busy beat of time,—
No, nor my fluttering breath, nor struggling pulse;
Nor does one moment differ from the next.
I had a dream: yes, some one softly said,
"He 's gone"; and then a sigh went round the room.

. . . . . .

Am I alive or dead? I am not dead,
But in the body still, for I possess
A sort of confidence which clings to me,
That each particular organ holds its place
As heretofore, combining with the rest
Into one symmetry, that wraps me round,
And makes me man; and surely I could move,
Did I but will it, every part of me.
And yet I cannot to my sense bring home
By very trial that I have the power.

. . . . . .

So much I know, not knowing how I know,—
That the vast universe, where I have dwelt,
Is quitting me, or I am quitting it.
Or I or it is rushing on the wings

[1] Lucas Cleeve.

Of light or lightning on an onward course,
And we e'en now are million miles apart;
Yet . . . is this peremptory severance
Wrought out in lengthening measurements of space,
Which grow and multiply by speed and time?
Or am I traversing infinity
By endless subdivision, hurrying back
From finite towards infinitesimal,
Thus dying out of the expansive world?

Another marvel: some one has me fast
Within his ample palm: 't is not a grasp
Such as they use on earth; but all around
Over the surface of my subtle being,
As though I were a sphere, and capable
To be accosted thus, a uniform
And gentle pressure tells me I am not
Self-moving, but borne forward on my way.
And hark! I hear a singing, yet in sooth
I cannot of that music rightly say
Whether I hear, or touch, or taste the tones:—
Oh, what a heart-subduing melody![1]

I question much if, even in the hour of seeming unconsciousness, the soul is really unconscious. Who shall say that it is not the developed consciousness of the spirit that makes it all unconscious of the things of sense? Consciousness lives on. This moment consciously in the body; the next consciously out of the body. This moment far from

[1] John, Cardinal Newman.

Him, the next moment consciously in the presence of God. Such is death; not only a change in the circumstances of life, but a conscious change: "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." The expiring believer does not see death: he sees the heavens opened, and Jesus Christ standing at the right hand of God. It is not a Dark Valley through which he passes, but he moves along the highway of the Lord to the palace of the great King.[1]

I am rising, and not setting;
This is not night, but day;
Not in darkness, but in sunshine,
Like a star, I fade away.

All is well with me for ever;
I do not fear to go;
My tide is but beginning
Its bright, eternal flow.[2]

Death, as the Christian comes up near to it, shows what it really is,—the gathering up of the issues of life, the sublime grouping and grasping together in God's great hand of all the results of one period of being, that they may be handed over into another. It is the concentration or bringing to a focus of all the forces of the first life, that they may thence be re-expanded and spread out into the second. It is the point to which all earth has been struggling, that it might embark for heaven.[3]

[1] Rev. Augustus C. Thompson. [2] Horatius Bonar.
[3] Phillips Brooks.

Joy! shipmate, joy!
(Pleased, to my soul at death I cry);
Our life is closed, our life begins;
The long, long anchorage we leave;
The ship is clear at last; she leaps!
She swiftly courses from the shore!
Joy! shipmate, joy![1]

[1] Walt Whitman.

The Soul's Journey

O CHANGE! O wondrous change!
Burst are the prison bars!
This moment there—so low
In mortal pain—and now
Beyond the stars!

HORATIUS BONAR.

When the fleshly prison-walls of the mind fall, its first inheritance is a stupendous freedom. The narrow limits that caged it here are gone. . . . The soul may have the freedom of the universe.

W. R. ALGER.

O my brave Soul,
Oh, farther, farther sail!
O daring joy, but safe!—
Are they not all the seas of God?
Oh, farther, farther sail!

WALT WHITMAN.

III

I KNOW that Heaven is not far from me. It is not (I believe) one day's or hour's journey for a separated soul. How quick is the Communion of my Eyes with the Sun that seems so far off! And couldst Thou not show it to me in a moment? Is not Faith a seeing grace?[1]

Think thy shell broke, think thy soul hatched but now;
And think! this slow-paced soul, which late did cleave
To a body, and went but by the body's leave,—
Twenty perchance or thirty mile a day,—
Despatches in a minute all the way
'Twixt earth and heaven: she stays not in the air, . . .
But ere she can consider how she went,
At once is at and through the firmament.[2]

"To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." As this promise was uttered in the afternoon, it meant that before the sun then westering had sunk below the horizon, this ransomed soul would be with Jesus in heaven. Even when we think of heaven as a

[1] Richard Baxter. [2] John Donne, 1573.

definite place of abode, we are accustomed to think of it as at an immeasurable distance from the earth.[1]

No; wild though the storm be, and dark the day,
And the shuddering soul may clasp its clay,
Afraid to go, and unwilling to stay;
  But when it girds it for going,

With a rapture of sudden consciousness,
I think it awakes to a knowledge of this,—
That heaven our closest neighbor is,
  And only waits for our knowing;

That 't is but a step from dark to day,
From the worn-out tent and the burial clay
To the rapture of youth renewed for aye,
  And the smile of the saints uprisen.[2]

"Rise," said my father in a voice of solemn authority, "rise quickly!"

I struggled at his words, for he seemed to slip from me, and I feared to lose him. I struggled and struck out into the air; I felt a wild excitement, like one plunged into a deep sea, and desperately swimming, as animals do and a few men, from blind instinct, having never learned. My father spoke encouragingly and with tenderness. He never once let go my hand. I felt myself, beyond all doubt, soaring—slowly and weakly,—but surely ascending above the solid ground. "See! there is nothing to fear," he said from time to time. I did not answer. My heart beat fast.[3]

[1] Rev. Archibald McCullagh, D.D. [2] Susan Coolidge.
[3] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

In joy unknown before
I mount, I soar,
And cleave the empyrean!
Above the empiric wind,
Cloud-wrapped and mist-defined,
Upward, through circumambient airs;
Where, from their fiery lairs,
Swift-darting meteors
Break without pause,—
Break in coruscant splendor!—
Upward, still upward, in divine surrender!
Celestial space is full,
Boundless, unfathomable.
Star-clusters burn
In ever-widening glories; planets stream
With majesty supernal;
And on ecstatic orbits, vast, supreme,
Rolling from cognizance still to return,
Measurers yet annihilants of time,
Coeval with the Eternal,
Remote worlds gleam,—
Worlds upon worlds, stupendous and sublime![1]

Let drive the sail! dare unconfined
Embark for the vastitude, O Mind,
Of an absolute bliss! Leave earth behind!

Here, by extremes, at a mean you guess:
There, all 's at most,—not more, not less;
Nowhere deficiency nor excess.[2]

[1] Julia P. Dabney.

[2] Robert Browning.

Out on a radiant sunlit Sea,
Where the waves are leaping joyfully,
And the breeze is blowing glad and free,
We sail to the Land where we would be:
We sail and sing
To the unseen King,
Whose smile on the Sea falls glittering.

And sailing, singing, over the Sea,
We dream of the Land where we would be,
And picture the Haven, fair and wide,
Where the longing heart shall be satisfied;
And the face of One
Who shines as the sun
In the kingdom which His sorrows won.[1]

I was as one who on the main
Has caught and lost a landward strain,
That came, and broke, and came again,
'Mid the hoarse billows' roar,
But, near as now the vessel floats,
Sound matched with sound, the choral notes
Pour warbling from the shore;
As all which once to joy or prayer
Had moved my grateful heart,
Seemed in one glorious hymn to bear
Its own familiar part.

But oh, with what a bounding thrill
I felt the airs that never chill,
The strength that knows not years,—
No cloud in all the heaven's sweet blue,

[1] B. M.

No death to close the longing view,
No dream of future tears!

Oh, joy, beneath the gathered sail
To hear afar the howling gale,
And feel the haven won!
Oh, joy, along the well-fought field,
To see the conqueror's spear and shield
Give back the setting sun!
All, all was mine; and battle's din,
And the wild sea of grief and sin,
No more with dawn should yet begin,
For all their work was done.[1]

We die alone. We go on that dark, mysterious journey for the first time in all our lives without one to accompany us. Friends are beside our bed,—they must stay behind.[2]

Alone! to land alone upon that shore!
With no one sight that we have seen before,—
Things of a different hue,
And the sounds all new,
And fragrances so sweet the soul may faint,—
Alone!—oh, that first hour of being a saint!

Alone! No; God hath been there long before,
Eternally hath waited on that shore
For us who were to come
To our eternal home;
And He hath taught His angels to prepare
In what way we are to be welcomed there.[3]

[1] Bishop George Burgess. [2] Rev. F. W. Robertson.
[3] F. W. Faber.

Not pressing through the portals
Of the Celestial Town,
An army of fresh Immortals
By the Lord of Battles won;
But one by one we come
To the gate of the heavenly home;

That all the Powers of Heaven
May shout aloud to God,
As each new robe is given,
Bought by the Master's blood,
And the heavenly raptures dawn
On the pilgrims one by one.[1]

What matters how or whence we start?
One is the crown to all;
One is the hard and glorious race,
Whatever be our starting-place: . . .
From the balm-breathing, sun-loved isles
Of the bright southern sea,
From the dead North's cloud-shadowed pole,
We gather to one gladsome goal,
One common home in thee,
City of sun and smiles![2]

A guest undid the gate,—
One who expects no welcome, soon or late.
Then Psyche took the parchment that he bore,
And whispered, gliding by him through the door:
"Kind Death, best friend, 't is my diploma given;
A graduate for heaven." [3]

[1] B. M. [2] Horatius Bonar. [3] Lucy Larcom.

At the Goal

. . . Oh, wonderful the way
That leads from darkness to the perfect day!
From darkness and from sorrow of the night
To morning that comes singing o'er the sea!

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

Earth breaks up, time drops away,
In flows heaven with its new day
Of endless life.

ROBERT BROWNING.

The goal in sight! Look up and sing;
Set faces full against the light;
Welcome with rapturous welcoming
The goal in sight.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

IV

LET us try to feel as well as believe that it is life, life with all its stunted capacities and idle occupation with baseless fabrics, which is the sleep, and that for us the end of it all is—to awake. . . . To ourselves and to God we shall awake. Here we are like men asleep in some chamber that looks towards the eastern sky. Morning by morning comes the sunrise, with the tender glory of its rosy light and blushing heavens, and the heavy eyes are closed to it all. Here and there some lighter sleeper, with thinner eyelids or face turned to the sun, is half conscious of a vague brightness and feels the light, but most of us sleep on unconscious. To us all the moment comes when we shall awake.[1]

Kings that lay down in state and earth's poor slaves,
Resting together in one fond embrace,
The white-haired patriarch and the tender babe,
Shall waken from the dreams of silent years
To hail the dawn of the immortal day.[2]

There is no weakness, nor weariness, nor wasting away, nor wandering of the burdened spirit; it is disenthralled, and lives its own life, unmingled and

[1] Rev. Alexander Maclaren. [2] William Cullen Bryant.

buoyant. When the coil of this body is unloosed, death has done all and his power is spent; thenceforth and for ever the sleeping soul lives mightily to God.[1]

Who died!—what means that word
Of men so much abhorred?
Caught up in clouds to be
For ever with the Lord:

To give this body, racked
With mortal ills and cares,
For one as glorious and fair
As our Redeemer wears! . . .

To run, to leap, to walk,
To quit our beds of pain,
And live where the inhabitants
Are never sick again:

To sit no longer dumb,
Nor halt, nor blind; to rise,
To praise the Healer with our tongue,
And see Him with our eyes.

To leave cold winter snows
And burning summer heats,
And walk in soft, white, tender light
About the golden streets.[2]

She woke and lay quite still, in that soft languor which attends a happy waking. . . . She had

[1] Rev. H. E. Manning, D.D. [2] Phebe Cary.

no wish to move, she lay in such luxurious ease and calm. But by and by, as she came to full possession of her waking senses, . . . there began to steal into the air about her the soft dawn as of a summer morning, the lovely blueness of the first opening of daylight before the sun. . . . The light grew fuller and fuller round, growing into day, clearing her eyes from the sweet mist of the first waking. Then she raised herself upon her arm. She was not in her room; she was in no scene that she knew. Indeed it was scarcely a scene at all, nothing but light, so soft and lovely that it soothed and caressed her eyes. She thought all at once of a summer morning when she was a child, when she had waked in the deep night which yet was day,—early, so early that the birds were scarcely astir,—and had risen up with a delicious sense of daring and of being all alone in the mystery of the sunrise, in the unawakened world that lay at her feet to be explored, as if she were Eve just entering upon Eden. In the recollection of that lovely hour, with a smile at herself, so different as she knew herself now to be, . . . she rose up, and it was strange how like she felt to the child she remembered in that still, summer morning so many years ago. Her body, which had been worn and racked with pain, felt as light and unconscious of itself as then. She took her first step forward with the same sense of pleasure, yet of awe, suppressed delight and daring and wild adventure, yet perfect safety.

But then the recollection of the little room in which she had fallen asleep came strangely over her,

confusing her mind.. "I must be dreaming, I suppose," she said to herself, regretfully, for it was all so sweet that she wished it to be true. . . . It was bliss enough to breathe and move, with every organ so free. After more than fifty years of hard service in the world, to feel like this even in a dream! . . . She felt so light, so airy, as if she could skip across the field like any child.[1]

It may well be that the new-born dead arises to a fresh world ready for his pleasant and novel but sublimated body, with gracious and willing ministrations awaiting it.[2]

Moving towards heaven, we 'll meet half-way
Some pilot from that unseen strand;
Then, anchoring safe in perfect day,
Tread the firm land;
Thence onward and for ever on
Towards summits piled on summits high.[3]

Presently she came to a little mound, upon which she paused to look about her. Every moment she saw a little farther,—blue hills far away, extending in long, sweet distance,—an indefinite landscape, but fair and vast, so that there could be seen no end to it, not even the line of the horizon save at one side, where there seemed to be a great, shadowy gateway, and something dim beyond. She turned from the brightness to look at this, and when she had looked for some time, she saw—what pleased her still more, though she had been so happy before

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Sir Edwin Arnold. [3] Lucy Larcom.

—people coming in. They were too far off for her to see them clearly, but many came, each apart, only one figure at a time. To watch them amused her in the delightful leisure of her mind. Who were they? she wondered; but no doubt some of them would come this way, and she would see.

Then suddenly she seemed to hear, as if in answer to her question, some one say: "Those who are coming in are the people who have died on earth."

"Died!" she said to herself aloud, with a wondering sense of the inappropriateness of the word which almost came to the length of laughter. In this sweet air, with such a sense of life all about, to suggest such an idea was almost ludicrous. She was so occupied with this that she did not look round to see who the speaker might be. She thought it over, amused, but with some new confusion of mind. Then she said: "Perhaps I have died too," with a laugh to herself at the absurdity of the thought.

"Yes," said the other, echoing that gentle laugh of hers, "you have died too."

She turned round, and saw another standing by her, a woman, younger and fairer and more stately than herself, but of so sweet a countenance that our little Pilgrim felt no shyness, but recognized a friend at once. She was more occupied in looking at this new face, and feeling herself at once so much happier (though she had been so happy before) in finding a companion who would tell her what everything was, than in considering what these words might mean. But just then the recollection of the four walls of her room in which she had fallen asleep

seemed to come round her for a moment, so that her whole soul was in a confusion. And as this vision slowly faded away (though she could not tell which was the vision, the darkened room or this lovely light) her attention came back to the words at which she had laughed, and at which the other had laughed as she repeated them.

"Died?" she said, looking with wonder in her companion's face, which smiled back to her. "But do you mean—you cannot mean—I have never been so well: I am so strong: I have no trouble—anywhere: I am full of life."

The other nodded her head with a more beautiful smile, and the little Pilgrim burst out in a great cry of joy, and said:

"Is this all? Is it over?—is it all over? Is it possible that this can be all?"

"Were you afraid of it?" the other said.

There was a little agitation for a moment in her heart. She was so glad, so relieved and thankful, that it took away her breath. She could not get over the wonder of it.[1]

How shall we speak our joy that day
We stand upon the peaceful shore,
Whose blest inhabitants shall say,
Lo! we are sick and sad no more?

How will life seem when fear, nor dread,
Nor mortal weakness chains our powers,
When sin is crushed and death is dead,
And all eternity is ours?[2]

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Phebe Cary.

The little Pilgrim could do nothing but talk of it, as one does after a great event. "To think one should look forward to it so long, and wonder, and be even unhappy trying to divine what it will be,—and this is all!"

"Ah, but the angel was very gentle with you," said the young woman; "you were so tender and worn that he only smiled and took you sleeping. There are other ways."[1]

There are as many other ways, no doubt, as there are individual souls. Just as there are varied experiences in this life,—no two persons having quite the same,—so there will be varied experiences in that entrance upon the future life which we call death. There will be no monotonous uniformity, we may believe, either in the journey to or the arrival in the new world beyond the tomb. And one other thing we may likewise believe,—that to each soul the journey and arrival will be exactly suited,—"prepared," we may say, with special reference to its character and needs. If one fearless and enterprising soul is allowed to find its own way into the joys and activities of the unknown land, if a pain-worn and toil-weary one is lapped for a time in a soft and healing hush, if a kindly angel guides the faltering steps of another, still another may be met on the threshold by kindred or friends, and taken to a home of which the earthly one, in its best estate, was but as the crude ore to the purified, shining gold.[2]

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] John Worden.

I was no stranger in a strange land there,
But rather as one who, travel-worn and weary,
Weary of wandering through many climes,
At length returning homeward, eyes far off
The white cliffs of his father-land, and ere
The laboring ship touches its sacred soil
Leaps on the pier, while round him crowding press
Children and kith and friends, who in a breath
Ask of his welfare, and with joyful tongues
Pour all their love into his thirsty ear.
Such welcome home was mine; such questionings
Of things that had befallen me since last
We met, and of my pathway thitherwards,
And of the dear ones I had left behind—
Words with embraces interspersed.
. . . Every step
Some fondly loved familiar face was seen
Which I had known in pilgrim days, unchanged,
And yet all bright with one similitude,—
Our Lord had looked on them.[1]

What is the dearest happiness of heaven?
Ah, who shall say?
So many wonders and so wondrous fair
Await the soul who, just arrivèd there,
In trance of safety, sheltered and forgiven,
Opens glad eyes to front the wondrous day:

Relief from earth's corroding discontent,
Relief from pain,
The satisfaction of perplexing fears,

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

Full compensation for the long, hard years,
Full understanding of the Lord's intent,
The things that were so puzzling made quite plain:

An all-astonished joy as, to the spot,
From farthest skies,
Crowd our belovèd with white-winged feet,
And voices than the chiming hearts more sweet,
Faces whose fairness we had half forgot,
And outstretched hands, and welcome in their eyes.[1]

I was content. I was happy. I asked for nothing. I needed nothing. I knew that I had barely passed the outmost border of the heavenly country, that I had scarcely so much as tasted of its beauty and joy; but the certainty—inhaled with every breath of the sweet air, seen in every object on which my eyes rested, felt in every fibre of my being—that all burdens of anxiety, doubt, dread, pain, perplexity, and sorrow had been for ever lifted from my shoulders, and that whatever was before me was sure to be bright and blissful, the unhindered, unveiled expression of the Father's love,—this certainty was enough for the present. There was no hurry; there would never be any hurry. Was not eternity before me?[2]

[1] Susan Coolidge. [2] L. M. Wooster.

In the Garden

Think, when our one soul understands
The great word which makes all things new,
When earth breaks up and heaven expands,
How will the change strike me and you
In the house not made with hands?

Robert Browning.

Far as the Christian imagination of heaven is removed from anything sensuous, we are not required to represent it to our minds as so severely spiritual, so unmixed a kingdom of ideas, that the simple and unintellectual and childlike would find no attraction in thinking of it.

Rev. A. J. Mason.

If God be God, then heaven is real:
We need not lose ourselves and Him
In some vast sea of the ideal,
Dreamy and dim.

Lucy Larcom.

V

Now I saw in my dream that by this time the pilgrims were entering into the country of Beulah,[1] whose air was very sweet and pleasant. The way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yea, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear in the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day; wherefore this was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither from this place could they so much as see Doubting Castle. Here they were in sight of the City they were going to; also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof, for in this land the shining ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven.[2]

Our blessed Lord, after He had passed through the grave and gate of death, said of Himself: "I am not yet ascended to my Father and your Father." It is clear from this declaration that in the disembodied state His soul had not yet passed into the heavens. It had, as we learn from His promise to the robber outlaw, departed to the waiting-place of righteous souls, to the Paradise of the blessed; and

[1] Isaiah lxii., 4.

[2] John Bunyan.

it was not until after His resurrection, when His human soul had been united again to His body, that He entered heaven.[1]

Paradise, which is here spoken of[2] as the destined place of the blessed, must be carefully distinguished from the third heaven, the dwelling-place of the perfected righteous. Paradise is, on the other hand, a place of incipient, though refreshing rest.[3]

Rest, observe! not sleep. That word is but an image (a beautiful one, it is true, associated as it is with tranquillity and refreshment), and we should be careful not to take it too literally. It does not necessarily imply that there is to be any long period of suspension of consciousness after the spirit's departure from the body. On the contrary, we may believe that its whole being is keenly alive to its new experiences and prospects, full of gladness in the present and of hope in the future.[4]

The word "paradise" is of Eastern origin, and is regarded by the best authorities as a Persian word. The expression is frequently used by Xenophon, and according to his use of it, suggests the idea of a wide, open park, fenced against injury, and yet with its natural beauty unimpaired; being adorned with stately trees, and fair shrubs, and fruits and flowers; watered with clear streams and stocked with beautiful birds and beasts. Thus we can understand how the term, whatever its true derivation may have been, came to be employed to represent the Garden of Eden.[5]

[1] Rev. Herbert M. Luckock, D.D. [2] Luke xxiii., 43.
[3] Lange. [4] Julia Wood. [5] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

Solomon spent all the resources of his wisdom in laying out paradises for himself. An Eastern paradise was, in its beauty, worthy of the royal palace which it surrounded, and to which it led; so the Paradise of God is, for glory and beauty, worthy of that City of God which it surrounds, worthy of that palace where God dwells, of that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God," worthy to be the outer courts through which they that are saved will pass under those gates of pearl and into those streets of gold. It is a place of preparation for the "fulness of joy in Heaven." [1]

"Abraham's Bosom" [2] is but another name for Paradise. . . . The imagery is suggestive of rest and refreshment; a place where the souls of the righteous recline, as it were, at a spiritual banquet, and are comforted with spiritual delights, holding sweet converse with the Saviour of men, and with the souls of holy men and women of every age; and awaiting, with calm yet earnest expectation, the redemption of their bodies and their admission into their final blessedness.[3]

Abraham's Bosom is the promise and assurance of salvation, and the expectation of Jesus Christ; not Heaven itself, but the expectation of Heaven.[4]

Joy to thee, Paradise!
Garden and goal and nest!

[1] Rev. J. E. Bellett.

[2] The imagery is manifestly derived from the custom of the Jews to recline on couches at their feasts, and to lay each his head on his neighbor's lap. It was considered a mark of especial favor and friendship. [3] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [4] Martin Luther.

Made green for wearied eyes,
  Much softer than the breast
Of mother-dove clad in a rainbow's dyes.

All precious souls are there,
  Most safe, elect by grace;
  All tears are wiped for ever from their face:
Untired in prayer
  They wait and praise,
  Hidden for a little space.[1]

But where is Paradise? It is not heaven, at least in the sense of that highest Heaven which is the Sanctuary of the Eternal Father. Our Lord descended into Paradise, but ascended into Heaven. The locality of Paradise is not revealed to us. . . . Where it is matters little; what it is, is all important to us.[2]

It is a kingdom, a great spiritual nation, with its own government and laws and ways of living. First, there is God's home-world, and with Him a bright host, for ever at liberty from grosser life, and awake to everything good; free, perhaps, in their movements to the infinite distances of space, their nature thrilled to happiness by the genial spirit that pervades the whole realm. Then there is the human part of heaven, our part, where the good life begins and grows, and people acquire the spirit of Heaven and begin to practise its habits. Possibly, also, this kingdom may embrace still other people in other worlds, who enjoy the same delightful privilege with us.[3]

[1] Christina G. Rossetti. [2] Rev. H. M. Luckock, D.D.
[3] Rev. Joseph M. Thompson.

One thing we may venture to assert,—that it is not a foreign and uncongenial region into which death will lead us, but a familiar and friendly one, wherein everything to which we have been accustomed and attached on earth will greet us in a "glorified and spiritual counterpart." There are those who fear to entertain any distinct conception of the world to come, overlooking or underrating the plain fact that our Lord carried His human nature with Him into heaven, and that it continues there, not only "for ever making intercession for us," an everlasting reminder of His life and sacrifice and a guaranty of His promise that "Where I am, there ye may be also," but a clear indication that there is something in our nature that will be at home in the heavenly country, and find there objects and conditions suited to its needs and tastes.[1]

That in His great humility He should have submitted to the conditions of men while walking among them, may be thought the necessary concomitant of His mission; but that, after His resurrection, when "all power in heaven and earth" had been given to Him, He should still have acknowledged His human nature,—sitting at meat with men, and talking familiarly with the old love and interest,—and further, that after His ascension, when He appeared to Saul in a flood of light which blinded the prostrate man, He should have addressed him, not in mystical or transcendental terms, but in the language of a common Eastern proverb, quoted by Æschylus, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks,"—that He

[1] John Worden.

should also, with a careful particularity, have directed Ananias to inquire for the blind man at a certain house in a certain street in Damascus, "Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul,"—that our glorified Lord condescended to retain such minute fellowship with the trivial ways of fallen men seems an incontrovertible proof that our poor human forms of speech, like our poor human selves, are not, and will not, be thought too base for heavenly uses.[1]

At least we may be sure that they will be retained as long as we need them, and that all necessary changes will be wrought gradually, evolved from what now is rather than begun wholly anew.[2]

This land is home; no stranger art thou here;
Sweet and familiar words
From voices silent long salute thee here;
And winds, and song of birds,
And bees and blooms and sweet perfumes are near.[3]

"Here I leave you to rest awhile," said my guide, and was gone so quickly that I knew not how nor whither. Then I looked about me with a direct and leisurely observation for which there had been no opportunity hitherto.

The scene was not what I expected; or it would be truer to say that I knew now that I had never had any clear-cut expectation of what Paradise would be, that all my conceptions of it had been vague and dreamy, much like the blots and blurs

[1] Lady Eastlake. [2] L. M. Wooster. [3] Unidentified.

that a child playing with water-colors might make, whereas what I saw was unmistakably definite and real. I was in the country, if that be an admissible term. Green grass, of a moss-like fineness and softness, was under my feet; green, blossomy boughs were over my head; before me was a vast expanse of undulating fields; through them a shining river flowed and wound with a musical murmur; in the distance was the cool shade of a forest and the fair curves of hills; at the horizon white mountain peaks rose against the pure azure of the sky. My first feeling was one of surprise that it was all so pleasantly familiar, so much like the earth-scenery that I had left behind.

And yet, when was an earthly landscape so exquisitely lovely? not a line, not a tint, that the most consummate art could better! And the light!—at once soft and brilliant, caressing the eyes as with the touch of loving fingers,—when was ever earthly light like that? Was it sunshine or skyshine? or was it—the sweet old words sang themselves through my memory—was it that "the glory of God did lighten it?"

As I continued to gaze, I found that wherever I looked steadily for some time things afar off became as clear to me as those that were nearer, as if my eyes had acquired a telescopic power of adapting themselves to the distance. I discovered the outlines of fair villages scattered over the farther scene, also a city with walls and gates, roofs, arches, and towers. I saw people too, after a little, men, women, and children going into or coming out of those

gates; light and graceful, or stately and majestic forms, all moving with an ease and grace that suggested a musical accompaniment. And when I looked long at any one of them so that the form and features became distinct, they seemed to become conscious of it, and turned towards me with a smile or a wave of the hand as they went on their way. Yet when I looked again at the nearer objects the farther ones faded and vanished, and only the soft blue and violet tints and dim distant lines remained.

Most wonderful of all was the sense of peacefulness and safety and leisure that seemed to pervade my whole being. On the earth I had been busy and burdened, and the days were never long enough for all that I had to do; but here I remained under the overshadowing tree in perfect tranquillity and contentment, yet with a buoyant readiness and hopefulness in regard to the future.'

They erred who taught
That in His presence faith and hope are lost
Who is the God of patience and of hope:
Things once invisible were visible,
Things hoped-for present, but beyond them all
Illimitable folds untravelled lay;
And over these faith saw God's rainbow cast,
And young-eyed hope winged many an airy flight.[2]

We are here the creatures of expectation, and hope may well be called the elixir of life. Our happiness springs not only from the good which we

[1] Leonard Mason. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

already possess, but from the pleasing hope and expectation of that which is to come. There is no reason for believing that it will be otherwise in heaven.[1]

[For] it will be worth while to look forward again when we are at the beginning of a new life. It will be possible to hope once more when disappointments are all past. A boundless future stretching before us, of which we know that it is all blessed, and that we shall reach all its blessedness, will give back to hearts that have long ceased to drink of the delusive cup which earthly hope offered to their lips, the joy of a living present, made bright by the constant anticipation of a yet brighter future. Losing nothing by our constant progress, and gaining all which we foresee, we shall remember and be glad, we shall hope and be confident.[2]

Youth would be a poor and tame experience without its "long, long thoughts." It is richer in the future than it is in the present. The landscape around it is gladdest in the visionary beckoning of "a fair, long Paradise beyond the mountains." And this is the very essence of its spiritual meaning. We are old, we are ready to die—nay, we are already dead—when we see nothing before us worth striving after. It is the forward look of the soul that keeps her for ever young. . . . Under sinless skies, clearer vistas will open on the released soul, as it starts with new vigor upon its unending pilgrimage. Its joy will spring up like a flower to drink in the wonder of the unknown, uplifted horizons, the

[1] Rev. Robert Meek. [2] Rev. Alexander Maclaren, D.D.

grandeur of a for ever opening Beyond. It will grow younger for the very boundlessness of its outlook.[1]

A short season, probably, will be enough to impart to us an easy familiarity with our new home, and the ready use of our corporeal instruments, and a facility in joining in with the economy around us. Moreover, it is reasonable to suppose that,—whereas in the present state, the heterogeneous elements of mind and matter, so consorted with the animal organization, are held together by force, and so as to occasion a vague feeling, coming over us at times as if we were dreaming, or as if our life were an enigma, and as if we were held back from actual contact with what is real and substantial,—on the contrary, when the corporeal nature has become nothing else than the instrument and vehicle of the mind, and when the two elements of our existence have come to be perfectly blended, and when, as a consequence, our feelings are all of one sort, and when our several energies and impulses, instead of counteracting one another, shall flow on always in the same direction,—it is reasonable to suppose that then there shall attend us an incomparably more vivid sense of reality, that then we shall perceive all things with a sharp intensity and shall have a bright, vivid consciousness of life, such as shall make us think of the bygone period of animal life as if indeed it had been a dream.[2]

The senses of those in heaven are far more exquisite than they were in the world; they see and hear more perfectly, and think more wisely. For

[1] Lucy Larcom. [2] Isaac Taylor.

they see by the light of heaven and hear by a spiritual atmosphere.[1]

I heard the songs of Paradise;
Each bird sat singing in his place,
A tender song so full of grace
It soared like incense to the skies.
Each bird sat singing to his mate
Soft-cooing notes among the trees;
The nightingale herself were cold
To such as these.[2]

The birds were singing. One among them had a marvellous note. I listened to it for some time before I discovered that this bird was singing a Te Deum. How I knew it was a Te Deum I cannot say. The others were more like earthly birds, except for the thrilling sweetness of their notes, and I could not see this one, for she seemed to be hidden from sight on her nest. I observed that the bird upon the nest sang here as well as that on the bough, and that I understood her "Te Deum laudamus—laudamus" as distinctly as if I had been listening to a human voice.

When I had comprehended this, and stood entranced to listen, I began to catch the same melody in the murmur of the water, and perceived, to my astonishment, that the two—the brook and the bird—carried parts of the harmony of a solemn and majestic mass. Apparently these were but portions of the whole, but all that it was permitted me to hear.[3]

[1] Emanuel Swedenborg. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.
[3] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

My attention was next attracted by the flowers blooming around me. Some of them were like those that I had known and loved on earth,—roses, lilies, violets,—but with a consummate perfection of form, color, and fragrance; others, even more lovely, were unknown to me, with green leaves of a beauty rivalling the blossoms; and thus mingled they brought to memory some favorite lines of Dante, which I repeated aloud:

"Refulgent gold and silver thrice refined,
And scarlet grain and ceruse, Indian wood
Of lucid dye serene, fresh emeralds
But newly broken, by the herbs and flowers
Placed in that fair recess in color all
Had been surpassed, as great surpasses less.
Nor nature there only lavished her hues,
But of the sweetness of a thousand smells
A rare and undistinguished fragrance made.

. . . . . .

As for the leaves that in the garden bloom,
My love for them is great, as is the good
Dealt by the Eternal Hand that tends them all."

My next sensation was one of gladness that my memory of the loved lines was so true and clear. Had I then feared that I should forget all that had been dear to me on earth? It would seem so. To "make assurance doubly sure" I gave my memory another trial, and Christina Rossetti's musical lines came to my lips:

"Once in a dream I saw the flowers
That bud and bloom in Paradise:
More fair they are than waking eyes
Have seen in all this world of ours.

And faint the perfume-bearing rose,
And faint the lily on its stem,
And faint the perfect violet,
Compared with them."

And again:

"I pluck fresh flowers of Paradise,
Lilies and roses red,—
A bending sceptre for my hand,
A crown to crown my head:
I sing my songs, I pluck my flowers
Sweet-scented from their fragrant trees;
I sing, we sing amid the bowers
And gather palm-branches."

Should I suit the action to the word? No, I was not quite ready yet to "pluck fresh flowers of Paradise" or "sing amid the bowers,"—I was still too strangely thrilled with the wonders that were around me, the "presence and the pressure of beauty" so pervading and superlative, the anticipation of new scenes, new truths, new powers of appreciation and assimilation, in what I now felt was in reality "everlasting life."

The clear-flowing river gave another impulse to my memory, and as I walked down to its brink over the soft greensward, I murmured half unconsciously:

"I saw the fourfold River flow,
And deep it was, with golden sand;
It flowed between a mossy land
With murmured music grave and low.
It hath refreshment for all thirst,
For fainting spirits strength and rest;
Earth holds not such a draught as this
From east to west."

An impulse to test the truth of that poetic foretaste took possession of me with irresistible force. Making a cup of my hands in a fashion that I had learned in childhood, I drank of the sparkling water once and again. The effect was almost beyond expression; it not only satisfied every thirst of soul and heart, no matter how deep or subtle or long-existent, but it did it so completely, so surely, that it seemed as if I could never thirst again. Nor was that all: as I bent over the stream, looking into its depths, they seemed to invite, to woo me with such a magical power and tenderness that I stepped into the smiling ripples and went on and on until they flowed over my head, with no sense of suffocation or strangeness, but rather as if I had found an element as native as the air. When I emerged from that bath I felt that whatever soil or disease of earth had remained in me was all washed away, and I was really fit for the new life upon which I had entered. Nor did it seem strange that my garments were in nowise wet, but the water fell from them in crystalline drops and left them pure, sweet, and dry.[1]

Sudden I grew aware I was new-born:
All pain had vanished in the absorbing swell
Of some exalting peace that was my own;
As the moon dwelt in heaven did calmness dwell
At home in me, essential. The earth's moan
Lay all behind. Had I then lost my part
In human griefs,—dear part with them that groan?
"'T is weariness," I said; but with a start

[1] Louise Mathilde.

That set it trembling, and yet brake it not,
I found the peace was love. O my rich heart! . . .
The very grass, cool to my feet, I knew
To be love also, and with the love I bore
To hold far sympathy, silent and sweet,
As having known the secret from of yore.[1]

Blissful with this new consciousness, I sank down on the grass by the river's brink, and felt my heart swell with love,—love for the beautiful country around me, love for the friends that I had left on earth, love for the friends that had come hither before me and whom I was surely to meet, love for the unknown friends that were as surely waiting to be known to me, and—enfolding all, enriching all,—love for the Christ whom unseen I had loved, and the Father to whose abounding love I owed it all—past, present, future; earth, paradise, heaven. I seemed to breathe and radiate love, and everything round me breathed and radiated answering love. I was alone, yet not alone; I should never be alone or lonely again; love, this new, rich, all-comprehending love, would henceforth be my solitude and companionship, my present and future, my more and more abundant life.

How long I remained thus I know not, nor did I seek to know. I remembered that I was in a land where days and hours were no longer reckoned or thought of.[2]

Spirits and men by different standards mete
The less and greater in the flow of time.

[1] George Macdonald. [2] John Worden.

By sun and moon, primeval ordinances,—
By stars which rise and set harmoniously,—
By the recurring seasons and the swing
This way and that of the suspended rod,
Precise and punctual,—men divide the hours,
Equal, continuous, for their common use.

Not so with us in the immaterial world:
But intervals in their succession
Are measured by the living thought alone,
And grow and wane with its intensity.
And time is not a common property,
But what is long is short, and swift is slow,
And near is distant, as received and grasped
By this mind and by that; and every one
Is standard of his own chronology.[1]

To see thee seemed so natural, so sweet!
And lingering there we talked of yesterday,
And of the pleasant friends we used to meet,
Working or singing, on the homeward way.

Scarcely it seemed that we had loosened hands
Since the glad moment when at first we met
And knew our kinship 'mid the dim, green lands
Of our fair earth, in heaven remembered yet.

Each questioned, "Hast thou lately hither sped?
Younger than yesterday thy face appears."
"Dear, deathless ones," a passing angel said,
"Since you left earth, time counts a thousand years."[2]

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [2] Lucy Larcom.

"Is it long since you have been here?" the little Pilgrim said.

"I came before you; but how long or how short I cannot tell. We count only by what happens to us. And as yet nothing has happened to me, except that I have seen our Brother."

"Oh, take me to Him!" the little Pilgrim cried. "Let me see His face! I have so many things to say to Him! I want to ask Him,—oh, take me to where I can see His face!"

And then once again the heavenly lady smiled. . . . He will come and see you, perhaps when you are not thinking. But when He pleases. We do not think here of what *we* will."

The little Pilgrim sat very still, wondering at all this. She had thought that when a soul left the earth it went at once to God and thought of nothing more except worship and singing of praises. . . . She sat and wondered and pondered. She was baffled at many points. . . . She smiled at herself and her dulness, feeling sure that by and by she would understand.

"And don't you wonder, too?" she said to her companion. . . .

"I do nothing but wonder," said she, "for it is all so natural, not what we thought."

The Pilgrim was silent for a little. . . . What she had heard had been wonderful, and it was more wonderful still to be sitting here all alone, save for this lady, yet so happy and at ease. She wanted to sing, she was so happy, but remembered that she was old and had lost her voice; and then remem-

bered that she was no longer old, and perhaps had found it again. And then it occurred to her to remember how she had learned to sing, and how beautiful her sister's voice was, and how heavenly to hear her; which made her remember that this dear sister would be weeping, not singing, down where she came from. . . . And she seemed to see the house darkened, and the dear faces she knew all sad and troubled . . . and crying if any one but mentioned her name, and putting on crape and black dresses, and lamenting as if that which had happened was something very terrible. . . .

"And oh," she said, "what can we do to tell them not to grieve? Cannot you send? Cannot you speak? Cannot one go to tell them?"

The heavenly stranger shook her head. "It is not well, they say. . . . For we must be parted. We cannot go back to live with them, or why should we have died? And then, we must all live our lives,—they in their way, we in ours. . . . All this we shall know better by and by."[1]

Farewell, friend, yet not farewell;
Where I am, ye too shall dwell;
When ye come where I have slept,
Ye will wonder why ye wept;
Ye will know, by wise love taught,
That here is all, and there is naught.
Weep awhile, if ye are fain,—
Sunshine still will follow rain;
Only naught is death,—for death,

[1] M. W. Oliphant.

Now I know, is that first breath
Which our souls draw when they enter
Life which is of all life centre.
Be ye certain all seems love,
Viewed from Allah's throne above;
Be ye stout of heart and come
Bravely onward to your home.[1]

"And you, did you come to meet me,—only out of kindness, though I did not know you?" the little Pilgrim said.

"I am nothing but an idler," said the beautiful lady, "making acquaintance. I was very hard-worked before I came here, and they think it well that we should sit in the sun, and take a little rest, and find things out."

Then the little Pilgrim sat still and mused, and felt in her heart that she had found many things out.

Four rivers watered Eden in her bliss,
But Paradise hath one which perfect is
In sweetnesses.

Eden had sun and moon to make her bright,
But Paradise hath God and Lamb for light,
And hath no night.

Unspotted innocence was Eden's best;
Great Paradise shows God's fulfilled behest,
Triumph and rest.[3]

[1] Sir Edwin Arnold. [2] M. W. Oliphant.
[3] Christina G. Rossetti.

It needed no long experience of life in the King's Garden to fill my heart with deepest gratitude that I was permitted to enter it. My keen sense of unworthiness only intensified my thankfulness to Him through whose love and sacrifice I had reached this blissful abode. My mortal life had been, on the whole, happy and successful. Trial and loss had not been unknown to me, but I had been enabled to meet them with faith and fortitude, trusting in the sun behind the cloud. I had never been tempted to join in that chorus of dispraise and discontent with which many—even good Christians—speak of what was still to me the dear old earth. But when I remembered it in connection with this new life, I could but echo St. Paul's "Not worthy to be compared." Its best was far behind this blessedness:

"Beauty, pride, and power are the blessings of an hour,
Bringing sorrow more than safety to the weary souls of men;
Better be a rose, the wildest one that blows,
And safe in the shelter of the King's garden!" [1]

[1] L. M. Wooster.

The Spiritual Body

Shuddering Doubt to Nature cries
(Nature, though she smiles, is dumb),
"How then can the dead arise?
With what body do they come?"

Lucy Larcom.

The spiritual body is but the visibility of the soul.

Henri Amiel.

The soul, having shaken off the flesh, doth then set up for herself.

Francis Bacon.

Vainly the flesh fades; soul makes all things new.

Robert Browning.

"Thou shalt be changed": a few short days
Will be enough to bring
A glory that through heart and flesh
Shall breathe immortal spring.

Caroline M. Noel.

VI

THE decay and final loss of the body we inhabit is only like a compulsory removal from an old and rickety to a new and more convenient house; and it is, on the whole, the most interesting experience open to man, so far as we know. None other compares with it, and . . . there is no reason why we should not look forward to this inevitable change with the same intelligent curiosity with which we should anticipate the exploration of an unknown but probably interesting country in this life.[1]

Whatever be its mystery of place (and that we cannot know till we know something of what place means to the disembodied spirit), the essential thing concerning death must be that it opens the closed eyes, draws down the veil of blinding mortality, and lets the man see spiritual things. This seems to me to change the question that we ask about dying, and to make it so much deeper and truer. It is no longer, "Where shall I go when I am dead?" but, "What shall I be?"[2]

But in order to have even an approximate conception of what we shall be in the future life, it is necessary to have a distinct idea of what we are in this present life. For the future grows out of the

[1] Charles Nordhoff. [2] Phillips Brooks.

present, and in a certain degree must answer to it as solution to problem.[1]

Man is divisible into body, soul, and spirit. Through his body he is in communion with matter, organic and inorganic. Through his soul he is in communion with the animal creation. Through his spirit he is in communion with moral, intellectual, and Divine life. He is thus in touch with the whole universe, ranging from the dust of the ground to the Divine nature.[2]

We do not, as is sometimes said, "yield up our souls" at death, nor in this life can we be said to have a soul; we are souls, here, now, and for ever. In infinite wisdom God has, for the time being, clothed each soul with a body as it pleased Him. Like our other garments, these bodies serve a temporary purpose; when that is accomplished they are to be laid aside, possibly with no more sense of loss than we have at parting with our worn-out clothing.[3]

"I cannot imagine how I can possibly get along without my body," said one.

"And I," said another, "believe that I can get along much better without mine. For years it has been a feeble, sickly body, hindering and hampering me continually, preventing me from doing the things that I would do, and forcing me to do the things that I would not do,—to be passive when I would be active, to be useless when I would be helpful, to be sparing of myself when I would gladly spend myself. Moreover, it never seems to be really *me*,

[1] Marcus Werner. [2] Rev. Malcolm MacColl. [3] Mrs. Gatty.

but a weight and a burden to which I am tied, and I look forward to being freed from it with actual longing. And I am not reduced to the necessity of being quite bodiless, either. I can[1] . . . imagine a corporeal frame, indestructible, indivisible, vital without waste, and therefore needing no pabulum, or none but such as might be supplied in a manner analogous to that in which the animal body derives support from the air and the light. Such a body . . . would have no welfare of its own to care for and to assert. Instead of an importunate controversy, never well adjusted and never brought to a conclusion, between body and spirit, there would be, on the one side, the sheer passivity of a tool or engine, and on the other side, the unchecked supremacy of a superior nature. There would be one class of interests only to be thought of, and only one class of occupations to be followed. . . .[2]"

However we may explain it, whether as implanted by God, or the result of long and labored evolution, there is something in the flesh that is superior to the flesh; something that can in finer moments abolish matter and pain, and it is to this we must cleave. I do not see how even the loss of mind tells against a belief in this superior thing,—for is the mind really dying in the same way the body dies? or is it only that the tools it works with are worn out or bent or broken?[3]

[Or, to give the reader a choice of comparisons, we may say that] A mind of balanced and finished

[1] L. M. Wooster. [2] Rev. J. M. Killen. [3] J. R. Lowell.

faculties is a production of infinite delicacy and of enduring constitution; lodged in a fast perishing organism, it is like a perfect set of astronomic instruments misplaced in an observatory shaken by earthquakes or caving in with decay. The lenses are true, the mirrors without a speck, the movement smooth, the micrometer exact;—what shall the Master do but save the precious system, refined with so much care, and build for it a new house that shall be founded on a rock?[1]

It is as easy to conceive that we may exist out of bodies as in them, that we might have animated bodies of any other organs and senses wholly different from those now given us, and that we may hereafter animate these same or new bodies variously modified and organized, so as to conceive how we can animate such bodies as our present. And the dissolution of all these several organized bodies, supposing us to have successively animated them, would have no more conceivable tendency to destroy the living beings, ourselves, or deprive us of living faculties, the faculties of perception and action, than the dissolution of any foreign matter which we are capable of receiving impressions from and making use of for the common occasions of life.[2]

Nor is it more wonderful that there should be a body fitted to the capacities and wants of man's highest part—his spirit—than that there should be one fitted to the capacities and wants of his subordinate lower nature.[3]

[1] Dr. James Martineau. [2] Bishop Butler. [3] Unidentified.

We challenge the accuracy of the idea that bodily form cannot be a characteristic of spirit. Whence came it? . . . Scores of spiritual appearances are recorded in Scripture. Angels have visited and conversed with men. In all these instances the spiritual beings have been in bodily shape. Thus, if the testimony of the Bible is to be believed, the super-physical is not formless. . . . St. John . . . describes his seeing the souls of the martyrs of the Christian faith "under the altar." The phrase is a Jewish one, and denotes Paradise. How does St. John represent these servants of the Lord who are waiting in the spirit-world for the consummation of redemption? As bodiless entities? Certainly not: he had learned the grand lesson of the Transfiguration too well for that. These human spirits had *voices* by which they could cry out, and *bodies* to which white robes could be given.[1]

They err who tell us that the spirit unclothed,
And from its mortal tabernacle loosed,
Has neither lineament of countenance,
Nor limit of ethereal mould, nor form
Of spiritual substance. The Eternal Word,
Before He hung upon the Virgin's breasts,
Was wont to manifest Himself to me[2]
In visible similitude defined;
And when on Calvary He gave up the ghost,
In that emancipated Spirit went forth
And preached glad tidings to the souls below.

[1] Rev. Arthur C. Chambers. [2] The speaker is an angel.

The angels are but spirits,—a flame of fire,
And subtle as the viewless winds of heaven,—
Yet are they each to the other visible.[1]

It never seems to strike some persons that it is possible there may exist bodies other than those compounded of material particles.[2]

Moreover, matter itself is capable of numberless modifications and transformations, some of them—such as light, air, the gases—being ethereal enough to escape our sight and touch. Beneath the forms of matter that we can see and handle, there are others which we cannot see and can only imperfectly handle; who can say what still more invisible and intangible forms are hidden beneath these, and are capable of entering into the composition of the body that shall be, the "clothing upon" of the immortal spirit? That such a body may exist, underlying and interpenetrating the earthly body, is neither inconceivable nor impossible. Dr. McCullagh has an interesting speculation touching this matter: he opines that, if the flesh, bones, muscles, arteries, nerves, bioplasts, nervous force or electricity, and the something behind all these which constitutes identity, could each be separated from all the rest and held up to view in its natural position, each one would have a human form, each "would be coincident everywhere with the mysterious physical outline," and the later and more refined forms, quite invisible and intangible to our human senses, would seem to be "ethereal enough to go to heaven."

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [2] Rev. Arthur C. Chambers.

This may hint at an explanation of St. Paul's "terrestrial" and "celestial" bodies,—of each of which, it should be noted, he says not that it shall be, but that it *is*. Evidently he believed in the redemption of the body as well as the soul, in the resurrection of the whole man—body, soul, and spirit—to eternal life.[1]

Thus, in our existence beyond the tomb, we shall not be pure spirits,—that is a meaningless expression for both reason and imagination: what is life without organs of life, or the personality without the form that defines and fixes it?[2]

I swear to you, that body of yours gives proportions to your soul somehow to live in other spheres; I do not know how, but I know it is so.[3]

After the disintegration of our material organs, we may . . . possess in a refined form the equivalents of what those organs gave us. . . . However boldly it may be assailed and rejected as a baseless theory, no materialistic logic can *disprove* the existence of an ethereal form contained in, animating, and surviving the visible organism. It is a probability; although even if it were a fact, science, by the very conditions of the case, can never unveil and demonstrate it.[4]

As I bounded on I looked curiously at the construction of the body in which I found myself. It was, and yet it was not, like that which I had worn on earth. I seemed to have slipped out of one garment into another. Perhaps it were nearer the truth

[1] John Worden. [2] Victor Hugo. [3] Walt Whitman. [4] W. R. Alger.

to say that it was like casting off an outer for an inner dress. . . . Vague visions of gaseous or meteoric angelic forms have their places in the imaginations of most of us below; we picture to ourselves a kind of nebulosity. When I felt the spiritual flesh, when I used the strange muscle, when I heard the new heart-beat of my heavenly identity, I remembered certain words, with a sting of mortification that I had known them all my life, and paid so cool a heed to them: "There is a terrestrial body, and there is a celestial body." The glory of the terrestrial was one. Behold, the glory of the celestial was another. . . . Nothing in the whole range of what we used to call the Bible had been more explicit than those words; they were as clear-cut as the dictum of Descartes. I recalled them with confusion as I bounded over the elastic and wondrously tinted grass.[1]

This spiritual body "is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption." It cannot decay. Eternal ages will pass over it, and it will remain the same. . . . Further: "it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power,"—that is, I suppose, with all its faculties wonderfully intensified, and possibly with fresh faculties granted which here it never possessed, and the mind of man could not even imagine. This last also seems to be implied by its being called a spiritual body. As *here* it was an animal body, subject to the mere animal life, or soul, hemmed in by the conditions of that animal life, so *there* it will be under the dominion of, and suited to the wants of, man's

[1] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

spirit, the lofty and heavenly part of him. And if we want to know what this implies, our best guide will be to contemplate the risen body of our Lord, as we have it presented to us in the Gospel narrative. As He is, so are we in this world in our essence even now; and as He is, so shall we be entirely there. He is the first fruits, we follow after as the harvest.[1]

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have," was what Christ said to His disciples, to dispel their fears and convince them that they really saw their Master, and not a phantom. There are those who, construing the words literally, hold that our Lord was then in His natural, earthly body, upon which the final change was not wrought until after His ascension, when "in the twinkling of an eye," His mortal put on immortality, though the fact of His passage through the closed door seems to militate against this theory. But we are here in the midst of mysteries into which we cannot look deeply, nor is it necessary. The plain points to be made are that His body was real, tangible, and recognizable; that it was human enough to take food, spiritual enough to be independent of material barriers, and as the "first fruits" of the resurrection showed that those who "come after" Him may also expect to possess real, tangible, and recognizable bodies.[2]

There is not the slightest indication in Scripture that we are to assume ghostly or immaterial aspects. Flesh and blood, we know, "cannot inherit the

[1] Henry Alford, D.D. [2] Mortimer Washburn.

kingdom of heaven," but there is no hint that flesh and blood are to be replaced by anything unsubstantial or even strange. "There is an earthly body, and there is a spiritual body," but both, let us observe, are *bodies;* and as the angels are described as "excelling in strength," so we may infer that our spiritual bodies, which, like theirs, are incorruptible, may excel in strength likewise. That they will be perfect,—that those who here have borne the cross of defective senses and of other human ills will there have their eyes and ears opened, even as the Saviour opened them here,—that the lame will walk and the sick be restored,—is a creed of which faith may be certain.[1]

All outward things shall then be fully and clearly communicated to the spirit; that glorious body will be a perfect instrument of knowledge. We shall then seem what we are, as we shall also be what we ought. All that we desire to do we shall then do, nor be longer tortured with tremulous hands that can never draw the perfect circle we plan, and stammering lips that will not obey the heart, and throbbing brain that *will* ache when we would have it clear.[2]

Our spiritual body was the same in type,
In face and form and fashion, as on earth,
Yet not the same—transfigured: suited this
For the quick motions of the new-born spirit,
As that for all the functions of the flesh;
Obedient to our faintest wish, as was
Sometimes the disembodied soul; yea, more,

[1] Lady Eastlake. [2] Alexander Maclaren, D.D.

So willingly responsive that it woke
Wish to exert, where exercise itself
Was pleasure. Would I speak? my tongue was fain,
And language copious, yet precise and clear.
. . . Would I touch my harp?
The very touch was music, and enticed
Melodious words. . . . Or would I move?
Volition, without wings or nimble tread
Of footsteps, wafted my aërial form
Swifter than sunbeams glance from East to West,
Whithersoe'er I would, as mortals move
Their hand or foot by motion of swift thought.
A body meet for heaven, as that for earth;
One from the other nascent: that the root,
This the fair flower: even as the hyacinth,
With its pavilion of green leaves and wealth
Of blossom and rose-tinted petals, springs
From a dull, dismal bulb, which none who saw,
And knew not of its latent power, could dream
The cradle of such loveliness; yet each
Meet for its home.[1]

A spiritual body must exercise far mightier powers than the present body over the material elements, since it is not restrained by its own fetter.[2]

Are we free to spread over the face of this little earth, and never freed to spread through the solar system and beyond it? Nay, the heavenly bodies which we can discern, for all their majesty, are to the ether which contains them as mere spores of seaweed floating in the ocean. Are the specks only filled with life and not the space?[3]

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [2] Bishop Burgess. [3] Sir Edwin Arnold.

To spiritual beings there is probably nothing corresponding to what we mean by distance. They do not travel by locomotion; like thought, they are instantaneously where they wish to be. Nearness to or distance from Christ would, therefore, for such beings, have no relation to locality or space, but only to spiritual perception. The fissure which enabled the proto-martyr or the Apostle to see or hear Christ "at the right hand of God" was not in "the heavens," but in their own material organisms. The latent powers of the human spirit were enabled to pierce material objects as if they did not exist, and to perceive the presence of the Son of Man in glory, always near us, although we are unable to apprehend it under the limitations of our present condition.[1]

And when, reclothed with flesh, our body shows
  Glorious and holy, then our being's bliss
Will be more sweet as it completeness knows;
  And so will grow and brighten in us this—
The light the Chief Good gives of His free grace,
  The light by which we see Him as He is.
And thus that vision needs must grow apace,
  Grow, too, the ardor kindled by that sight,
Grow, too, the brightness shed from it through space.
  But, as a coal that giveth flame and light,
Yet these by its white heat surpasseth so,
  That its own aspect still remains its right;
So shall the glory that doth round us show
  Yield in its radiance to the fleshly frame

[1] Rev. Malcolm MacColl.

Which now the earth hides sepulchred below;
Nor shall we wearied grow with that bright flame,
For all our body's organs will be strong
For every object that delights the same.[1]

Birth gave to each of us much; death may give very much more, in the way of subtler senses to behold colors that we cannot here see, to catch sounds that we do not now hear, and to be aware of bodies and objects impalpable at present to us, but perfectly real, intelligibly constructed, and constituting an organized society and a governed, multiform state. Where does Nature show signs of breaking off her magic, that she should stop at the five organs and the sixty or seventy elements?[2] Many more may be required to bring us into relation with all the facts in Himself which God may have shadowed forth in properties, as we say, of what we call "matter."[3]

We cannot conceive of a new color contained in the spectrum of our sun; though it would be very rash in us to assert that some other of the myriad suns in the infinite universe does not give out to its planets a color unknown to us, or that the organs of vision in some animals do not reveal to them colors which the human eye and brain cannot discern.[4]

Beyond doubt the world, even as at present constituted, possesses far different properties and presents other aspects, perhaps far deeper, grander,

[1] Dante: trans. by E. H. Plumptre.
[2] Sir Edwin Arnold.
[3] George Macdonald.
[4] Charles Nordhoff.

larger, than any now open to us. The perfect senses of our new bodies will bring us at once into the presence of the whole universe. Our energies will not flag with fatigue, nor will they be exhausted with age.[1]

The perfect man in the heavens will include the graces of childhood, the energies of youth, the steadfastness of manhood, the calmness of old age; as on some tropical trees, blooming in more fertile soil and quickened by a nearer sun than ours, you may see at once bud, blossom, and fruit—the expectancy of spring, and the maturing promise of summer, and the fulfilled fruition of autumn, hanging together on the unexhausted bough.[2]

In Paradise everybody will be beautiful. For, as the righteous soul is naturally beautiful, as the spiritual body is but the visibility of the soul, . . . and as happiness beautifies all that it penetrates or even touches, ugliness will have no more place in the universe, and will disappear with grief, sin, and death.[3]

Oh, how glorious and resplendent,
Fragile body, shalt thou be,
When endued with so much beauty,
Full of health and strong and free,
Full of vigor, full of pleasure,
That shall last eternally.[4]

The bodies of the blessed are styled *glorious*. That word denotes something more excellent than Beauty only, or than Proportion of Parts; namely, a

[1] A. A. Hodge. [3] Henri Amiel.
[2] Alex. Maclaren, D.D. [4] St. Bernard: trans. by J. M. Neale.

certain Light or Refulgency; nor can Matter or Body, be it ever so beautiful, appear glorious unless 't is illustrated with Light and Radiancy. Besides, the word δόξα [Glory], wherever in the Sacred Writings 't is spoke, either of natural bodies or of Divine or Angelic Appearances, almost always denotes something resplendent and illustrious. . . . But the question may be asked: Whether this Light and this Splendor are inherent in glorified Bodies? or whether they come from abroad, and are only reflected or transmitted as in Gems or polished Metals, or in other solid Bodies? . . . And now comes the last and most illustrious Character for the Formation of our celestial Bodies after the glorified Body of Christ. This Character confirms the former, and besides discovers to us that the Light which those glorified Bodies emit is inherent in them and dwells in them, and proceeds from an internal Principle, as from an exhaustless Fountain: for Christ, when He was on the Earth, in His Transfiguration, rendered Himself all Brightness, not by Reflection and borrowed Light, but from Himself He emitted that Virtue which caused Him to overflow with Glory, and to be immersed in a Deluge of Light: His Face did shine as the Sun and His Raiment was white as the Light: so says the Evangelist.[1]

"But," says one, "what we want to be assured of is that this glorious, beautiful, spiritual body retains a recognizable identity with its material predecessor, that the original body was a true seed of the body to be, that our loved ones and ourselves will not be

[1] Dr. Thomas Burnet, 1739.

so altered by their change of place and aspect as to become strange to us. We want to know, with Henry Ward Beecher, that 'the body which shall be, shall conserve and glorify the forces and the individuality and the form of the body that now is.'" To this St. Paul's simile of the seed is directly pertinent.[1]

The seed can but give birth to "its own body," and that "not quickened except it die." Nothing, therefore, so sure as that wheat will bear only wheat, or barley, barley, with no possibility of mistake or confusion; and nothing also so sure as that your body and my body, when dead, will only bear your soul and my soul. Herein is that identity, on which we have dwelt, assured, and yet an identity under the utmost diversity of condition. For the whole range of nature can scarcely present a greater disparity than between the humble and insignificant little seed and its always beautiful offspring; for even the commonest weed is a wonder. When we consider that this parallel and analogy is to hold good for our Beloved Ones, we need no further proof either of the preservation of their identity, or of the splendor of their transformation.[2]

[Moreover] we know that upon earth we inherit certain dispositions from our ancestors, that it is impossible for us to shake off. So in the life unending, we inherit something of the character we ourselves had upon the earth; and thus our earthly life is perpetuated in the unseen. The spiritual body of the unseen world is intensely individualized, the outgrowth of the personal character gained on earth,

[1] Julian Woodworth. [2] Lady Eastlake.

as a man's body is the outgrowth of the physical and moral life of his ancestors.[1]

Your real body and any man's or woman's real body—

Item for item, it will elude the hands of the corpse-cleaners, and pass to fitting spheres,

Carrying what has accrued to it from the moment of its birth to the moment of death.[2]

If physiological science be true, the human body, by the assimilation of new matter and the excretion of old matter, undergoes a complete change once in seven years [or oftener]. Notwithstanding the fact that the man of seventy has had ten bodies, and that his body has repeatedly been changed in size and expression, is he not conscious of being the same person that he was in his boyhood? Is it not then conceivable that the human body will preserve what is necessary to its identity amid all the changes that await it in the grave?[3]

For example, Scripture shows that two men, Samuel and Moses, did not lose their personality although their bodies had been consigned to the dust. The *men* themselves were alive after death. It shows, in Christ's parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, that those two individuals were still existent, although their bodies had died. It also shows, in the words of Jesus spoken to a dying man, that the extinguishment of His own and the robber's physical lives would be no obstacle to their meeting in Paradise on the day of the crucifixion.[4]

[1] From *A Story of The Heavenly Camp-fires.* [2] Walt Whitman.
[3] Archibald McCullagh, D.D. [4] Rev. Arthur C. Chambers.

So the body which a man will wear hereafter will be his own body,—by no means on account of an identity of component particles or of similar configuration, but because it is the only one which could issue out of that aggregate of faculties and relations called now his body, so employed as he employed it.[1]

A numberless reunion shall make whole
Each blessed body for its blessed soul,
Refashioning the aspects of the just:
Each saint who died must live afresh, and must
Ascend resplendent in the aureole
Of his own proper body to his goal,
As seeds their proper bodies all upthrust.
Each with his own, not with another's grace,
Each with his own, not with another's heart,
Each with his own, not with another's face,
Each dove-like soul mounts to his proper place:—
O faces unforgotten! if to part
Wrung sore, what will it be to re-embrace?[2]

I shall not care if the matter of the forms I loved a thousand years ago has returned to mingle with the sacred goings-on of God's science upon that far-off world wheeling with its nursery of growing loves and wisdoms through space; I shall not care so long as it is yourselves that are before me, beloved! so long as through these forms I know that I look on my own, on my loving souls of the ancient time; so long as my souls have got garments of revealing after their own lovely fashion,—garments to reveal themselves to me. The new shall then be dear as the

[1] Rev. A. J. Mason. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.

old, and for the same reason—that it reveals the old love.[1]

Love, friendship, the fulfilment of duty, the sacrifice of self for others, as well as the love of knowledge, the sense of admiration for the wonders of creation, and the appreciation of harmony in the works and designs of God,—all these are independent of the body; they may be experienced by and become the most potent and enduring causes of happiness in this life even to those who have the feeblest of bodies, or are cast in the least fortunate situations. Transferred to a broader life, with greatly enlarged powers, and relieved from the bonds and slavery in which we live here as to our physical part, we can conceive of these sensations and experiences as yielding an infinitely larger measure of happiness and content than we are capable of even imagining here.[2]

Certainly Christ's own resurrection was . . . most emphatically a bodily one. He showed the prints of the nails in His hands and feet; He insisted that a spirit had not flesh and bones, as they could prove for themselves that He had; and He partook of ordinary food in their sight. These were in order to prove to His followers, first, that His body was real and not visionary, and, secondly, that it was the same body which had suffered death upon the cross, and had been shut up in Joseph's sepulchre. Yet withal it was a changed body, in that it no longer was subject to certain laws of nature, neither was it any more corruptible. It was a body

[1] George Macdonald. [2] Charles Nordhoff.

which the Saviour could take and did take to heaven with Him, whereas mere "flesh and blood," as St. Paul tells us, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God."[1]

The story makes this clear,—that a true human life, still truly human, passed forth beyond our human conditions and found for itself a place in the sublimest regions of the universe. I cannot trace it, but that body of Christ yet lives in some mysterious and unknown region of this vast creation in one little corner of which we live. Humanity, then,—so the Ascension tells me,—may be at home somewhere else than on the earth. It has nobler kinships than with the brute. It may enter into the welcome of larger hospitality than any that the stateliest mountains or forests can extend. The Resurrection has shown that humanity might relive here upon the earth, even after the catastrophe of death that seems so terribly the end of all. The Ascension shows that out beyond the earth, wherever the vast system of existence is held as a unit in the hand of one Creator who is Lord of all, out to the end of things over which God reigns, this humanity which seems shut up to one small planet, may go and find a home and kindred beyond the farthest star.[2]

Oh, to be clothed upon
With the white radiance of a heavenly form!
To feel the winged Psyche quit the worm!
Life, life eternal won![3]

[1] Rev. Ulysses S. Bartz. [2] Phillips Brooks. [3] Lucy Larcom.

Clothing in the Garden

WHEREWITHAL shall we be clothed?

MATT. vi., 31.

We, who must toil and spin,
What clothing shall we wear?
The glorious raiment we shall win
Life shapes us, everywhere.

LUCY LARCOM.

We shall be clothed upon; we shall not be found naked.

Robes of festival
Wear thy dwellers all.

HORATIUS BONAR.

VII

AND may we not here also, without even an approach to profaneness, or to that presumption of drawing on the imagination which may be branded as "speculation,"—may we not here go further still, and maintain that garments of some kind will form part of the accessories of the next life? That angels are clothed, and that their clothing partakes of the glory in which they live, is expressly told. Cornelius said, describing the angel who visited him, "Behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing." And of the women just hastening from the empty sepulchre it is told, "Behold, two men stood by them in shining garments." The same glory, at the Transfiguration, attended the earthly raiment of our Lord, which became "white and glistering," and again, "whiter than any fuller could make them." . . . More might be added from Scripture on a subject thus given openly for our credence, but enough has been said to show that [in this particular also] no startling departure from human conditions is to be expected in the next life.[1]

The "white robe" that is "washed in the blood of the Lamb" is spoken of distinctly as a gift or grace of the State of Waiting. It is given to the "souls

[1] Lady Eastlake.

under the altar" in answer to their loud cry, not only as a token of the Divine favor, but as a communication of the purifying virtue of the blood of the Lamb. For that "fine linen, clean and white," is the "righteousness of saints." And the blood of the Lamb alone gives it its whiteness.[1]

These elect souls have presumably not labored all alike: some have borne the burden and heat of a long day, some have wrought but one hour, yet in the sphere of their acceptance these have no lack and those have nothing over. All are absolutely accepted, absolutely sanctified, absolutely perfected. Does it follow that all the robes are on a par? This point is not revealed. All are white, yet for aught we know one and another may differ in glory like stars, in beauty like flowers.[2]

And there are many kinds of white—opaque, diaphanous, lustrous, lustreless, snowy, pearly, creamy—and each has its own peculiar charm. There is a whiteness of velvet, of silk, of satin, of muslin, of linen, of lace, of kid,—all easily distinguishable one from the other, yet each undeniably white. Artists have succeeded in picturing a white robe on a white background, both distinctly white, yet both distinctly different.[3]

And how beautiful is whiteness for a garment we see illustrated on all sides: the dove is covered with "silver wings"; lambs wear a white fleece; lilies and snowdrops are white, and there is a white rose; the swan floats in whiteness on blue waters; overhead

[1] Rev. J. F. Davidson. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.
[3] Margaret Woostan.

white clouds float across a blue sky. Snow is white, and so is a pearl; and diamonds and light are colorless.[1]

Of death, of life, of mirth and grief,
We take it as the symbol true;
It suits the smile, it suits the sigh,
That raiment of the stainless hue.
. . . . . .
Mine be a robe more spotless still,
With lustre bright that cannot fade,
Purer and brighter than the robe
Of babe, or bride, or quiet dead.

Mine be the raiment given of God,
Wrought from fine linen, clean and white,
Fit for the eye of God to see,
Meet for the home of holy light.[2]

Nevertheless, whiteness is not an absence but rather a compendium of color. All tints, when united in a perfectly balanced harmony, resolve themselves into whiteness, and consequently all tints are capable of being redeveloped from whiteness. Thus colorless light paints the rainbow. And thus celestial whiteness will not restrict, but rather gratify the taste of all who wear it. At the first moment white does not suggest color; yet all color being latent in it, we finally discern in its train every lovely hue and gradation of hues. If thus it is with one word characteristic of heaven, how know we it is not so with every word?[3]

[1] Christina G. Rossetti. [2] Horatius Bonar. [3] Christina G. Rossetti.

Her movement called her attention to herself, and she found that she was dressed, not in her night-dress as she had lain down, but in a dress she did not know. She paused for a moment to look at it, and wonder. She had never seen it before; she did not know how it was made, nor of what stuff it was, but it fell so pleasantly about her, it was so soft and light, that in her confused state she abandoned that subject with only an additional sense of pleasure.[1]

The garment in which I found myself made me understand as never before what clothing should be. It fitted me perfectly as to waist, yet so easily that it restrained no action of limb or muscle. It was full and flowing as to skirt, yet not enough so to be either burdensome or inconvenient. It suited me so exactly that it seemed as if it might have grown spontaneously out of myself, or at least have been made in careful consideration of all my tastes and needs. It was not white, but a pale, soft blue—a color that I had loved on earth, and that had always answered to some subtle inner need or idiosyncrasy as harmoniously as one musical note to another in a perfect chord. I felt myself thoroughly at home in it.

Some of my companions were arrayed in soft, delicate tints, others in colors bright and gay; and they all impressed me as well-suited to the wearers. And I seemed to understand, without being told, that no one was forced to wear the same thing always, but could change at will; and that for great festivals suitable raiment was provided.[2]

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Juliet Lee Maclane.

It is written that "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Yet I was little prepared to see the ranks of the glorified in such radiant garments, with faces like the sun. Then I saw that the glory of the Lord had risen upon them, and that the Lord was their everlasting light. The light of love in every heart was glowing.[1]

Not only do the dwellers in the various parts of Paradise have beautiful and suitable garments, but Scripture shows that their natural love for ornaments is not forgotten. Angels have their breasts girded with golden girdles. The King's daughter has clothing of wrought gold. The elders have crowns of gold. And whatever be the spiritual interpretation of these material figures, we may be sure that they represent things more lovely and brilliant than our human imaginations can foresee.[2]

Crowns of righteousness await all the righteous; but not, it may be, crowns all alike, any more than all stars are alike in their glory. If by way of figure and illustration earthly treasures correspond at all with heavenly treasures, pearls seem fit for purity, and most fine gold for sanctity, changeable opals with one abiding spark for penitence, the perennial greenness of emeralds for hope that maketh not ashamed, diamonds sun-reproducing for faith, and for love carbuncles like coals of fire that hath a most vehement flame. Or rather, one and all for love; love being guard of purity, root of sanctity, spring of penitence, sustenance of hope, life of faith.[3]

[1] From *A Story of The Heavenly Camp-fires.* [2] L. M. Wooster.
[3] Christina G. Rossetti.

One thing is quite certain, that both the clothing and the ornaments of the happy dwellers in Paradise will be wholly beautiful—beautiful in form, tint, and texture; beautiful in their perfect adaptation to the characters and needs of the wearers; beautiful in their associations and prefigurements. They will be the complete "clothing upon" of the blissful and glorious spiritual body, meet for the homes and streets and occupations of heaven.[1]

[1] Jean Lomond.

The King in His Beauty

It is the supreme moment in the immortal life of the saint when he is permitted to see the face of Him whom not having seen he has loved.

Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D.

For what were all this gorgeous Paradise,
The music of these waters, and these bowers
Fragrant with fruitage,—what were all to me,
And tenfold all, twice measured, without Him?

Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

My rendezvous is appointed; it is certain;
The Lord will be there.

Walt Whitman.

When then—if such thy lot—thou seest thy Judge,
The sight of Him will kindle in thy heart
All tender, gracious, reverential thoughts:
Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn for Him.

John, Cardinal Newman.

VIII

How know I that it looms lovely—that land I have never seen—
With morning-glories and heartsease and unexampled green,
With neither heat nor cold in the balm-redolent air?
Some of this—not all—I know; but this is so—
Christ is there.

How know I that blessedness befalls in Paradise,
The outwearied hearts refreshing, rekindling the worn-out eyes,
All souls singing, seeing, rejoicing everywhere?
Nay, much more than this I know: for this is so—
Christ is there.[1]

Christ is a Person, and has a personal presence. He came down from heaven; He ascended to heaven. He says, "In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." We are not to think of the omnipresent Christ as diffused throughout space.[2]

Neither should we think of Him as fixed to His throne, too majestic, too kingly, to be approached by the least of His subjects; too much occupied to

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

[2] Rev. Burdett Hart.

be interested in each no less than in all. On earth He walked and talked familiarly with His disciples and friends; it is not improbable that in Paradise He will walk and talk with redeemed souls at His good pleasure.[1]

Hearken!—the voice of the Lord
Among the trees! Forth by the waters still
Of everlasting comfort He doth lead
His people: and their sun shall set no more,
And no rough winds shall ever rise, to blow
Upon their heads. For God Himself doth keep
This Garden; every moment with His dews
Doth water it, and shine upon it with
His Face. What time the sweet south winds do blow
Upon the Garden all the spices cast
Their fragrance forth, and all the trees are stirred
To heavenly music, and the people walk
In white: and lo! the Lamb is in their midst.

Hearken!—the voice of the Lord
Among the trees! no more our fading trees,
Which grew among our graves, and shiver oft
In our rough winters, but fair trees that stand
On either side His river, where the smile
Of God is sunlight; trees whereon no harps
Of mourners hang. Not coming down at eve
To walk a little while, and then depart,
But in this Garden walketh evermore
The King of Peace. See! this is He who lay
In the earth-garden dead, for the great love

[1] Louis M. Woodford.

Wherewith He loved the Church. Now doth He live
For evermore; and lo! the Church doth live
And walk with Him from henceforth in the skies.[1]

Nor is the saints' intercourse with their Lord in public only. In the long leisure of eternity there is ample opportunity for each one to meet Him personally and alone. And a few moments in His presence will be productive of enough of happiness for the glad and grateful soul to feed on for a period that would count as years of time. We must beware of limiting, even in thought, His power to bless and satisfy every loving, yearning soul in His Garden.[2]

Our Lord is equal to His tasks? Not so fast can heaven be filled that He is not ready to receive all who come. His voice is of welcome to every victorious believer. The places are always prepared in advance. By one offering He has opened the new and living way to the House of God.[3]

And whenever, across the mountains
  That compass the City of God,
Some ransomed soul from earth set free
Draws near in robes of victory
  Unto the King's abode,
He hears the far-off footstep
  Upon the hills of myrrh,
Through the sound of the living fountains
  And the sweet winds' wandering stir,
And He riseth up to greet
The trembling, joyful feet.[4]

[1] B. M. [2] Lloyd Mortimer. [3] Rev. Burdett Hart. [4] B. M.

Everybody in this land is at leisure to be spoken with. No gaunt figure of death is skulking along near philosophers and students, to strike at them before their work is done. And the thousand necessities that made their hours priceless in the Land of Shadow have now gone by for ever. Even the Son of Man, who felt the need of working while the day lasted in Galilee and Judea, is now at leisure to be spoken with: the shadow of the Cross no longer falls across His path; and eternity is a long time to work in, and every one who loves Him is sure some time to be alone with Him. Nor can I think without tears of that hour when I can tell Him, "Thou knowest me altogether, and Thou knowest that I love Thee."[1]

> Thou art coming, Thou art coming;
> We shall meet Thee on Thy way;
> We shall see Thee, we shall know Thee,
> We shall bless Thee, we shall show Thee
> All our hearts could never say.[2]

"Listen!" said the other; "I hear His step on the way."

The little Pilgrim rose up from the mound on which she was sitting. Her soul was confused with wonder and fear. . . . And in the air there was a sound such as those who hear it alone can describe, —a sound as of help coming and safety, like the sound of a deliverer when one is in deadly danger, like the sound of a conqueror, like the step of the dearest beloved coming home. As it came nearer,

[1] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires*. [2] Frances R. Havergal.

the fear melted away out of the beating heart of the Pilgrim. Who could fear so near Him? Her breath went away from her, her heart out of her bosom to meet His coming. Oh, never fear could live where He was! Her soul was all confused, but it was with hope and joy. She held out her hands in that amaze, and dropped upon her knees, not knowing what she did.[1]

I drew near to Him,
And He to me. O beatific sight!
O vision with which nothing can compare!
The angel-ministrant who brought me hither
Was exquisite in beauty, and my heart
Clave to his heart: the choristers of light
Who sang around our pathway, none who saw
Could choose but love for very loveliness.
But this was diverse from all other sights:
Not living only, it infused new life:
Not beautiful alone, it beautified:
Nor only glorious, for it glorified.[2]

To see the King in His beauty is to see the beauty of His glorified humanity taken for ever into the Godhead. It is to see that form which the Son of God took to Himself in the womb of the Virgin, bore while He dwelt on earth, raised from the grave, ascended with into heaven, and in which He now stands at the right hand of the Father. It is to see with the eyes the perfect manhood of God Incarnate; it is to see with the soul the beauty from which it derives any beauty,—the beauty of

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

holiness, of purity, of truth, of love, of mercy, of justice, of wisdom, of all perfection. It is to see this, not through cloud, or in vision, or broken by any mediums, but as directly as it is possible for the creature to see the Creator. It is for the soul to see by participation the more it partakes; beholding and becoming in itself beautiful in beholding, even as the light of the sun imparts its light to the object it falls upon, and glorifies that on which it shines.[1]

When—have mercy, Lord, on us!—
The whole Face turned upon me full,
And I spread myself beneath it
As when the bleacher spreads, to seethe it
In the cleansing sun, his wool,—
Steeps in the flood of noontide whiteness
Some defiled, discolored web,—
So lay I, saturate with brightness.[2]

Speaking, He gazed on me, and gazing sealed
Me with the impress of His countenance,
Until such close affinity of being
Enchained me, that the beauty of His holiness
Appeared unutterably necessary,
And by its very nature part of me.
I loved Him for His love; and from that hour
My life began to circle round His life
As planets round the sun,—His will my law,
His mysteries of counsel my research,
And His approving smile my rich reward.[3]

[1] William Maturin. [2] Robert Browning.
[3] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

For I knew, as I sat in that solemn hour with my face to the sea and my soul with Him, while sweeter than any song of all the waves in heaven or earth to sea-lovers sounded His voice who did commune with me,—verily I knew, for then and for ever, that earth had been a void to me because I had Him not, and that heaven could be no heaven to me without Him.

All which I had known of human love; all that I had missed; the dreams from which I had been startled; the hopes which had evaded me; the patience which comes from knowing that one may not even try not to be misunderstood; the struggle to keep a solitary heart sweet; the anticipation of desolate age which casts its shadow backward on the dial of middle life; the paralysis of feeling which creeps on with its disuse; the distrust of one's own atrophied faculties of loving; the sluggish wonder if one is ceasing to be lovable; the growing difficulty of explaining one's self even when it is necessary; the things which a lonely life converts into silence that cannot be broken, swept upon me like rapids as, turning to look into His dazzling face, I said, "This—all this He understands." [1]

He conversed with me long and earnestly, unfolding many of the mysteries of the Divine life. I hung upon His words; I drank in every tone of His voice; I watched eagerly every line of the beloved face; I was exalted, uplifted, upborne beyond the power of words to express.[2]

[1] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. [2] Rebecca R. Springer.

The voice—the vision—was not what you think—
But oh! it was *all*. It was the meaning of life,
Excellent consummation of desires
For ever, let into the heart with pain
Most sweet. That smile did take the feeding soul
Deeper and deeper into heaven. The sward
(For I had bowed my face on it) I found
Grew in my spirit's longed-for native land,—
At last I was at home.'

Many things there had been in her mind to say to Him. She wanted to ask for those she loved some things which perhaps He had overlooked. She wanted to say, "Send me." . . . But when the little Pilgrim, kneeling, and all shaken and trembling with devotion and joy, was at His feet, lifting her face to Him, seeing Him, hearing Him, then she said nothing at all. She no longer wanted to say anything, or wanted anything but what He chose, or had power to think of anything but that all was well, and everything—everything as it should be in His hand. It seemed to her that all she had ever hoped for was fulfilled when she met the look in His eyes. At first it seemed too bright for her to meet; but the next moment she knew it was all that was needed to light up the world, and in it everything was clear. . . . Though she still knelt her head rose erect, drawn to Him like the flower to the sun. She could not tell how long it was, nor what was said, nor if it was in words. All she knew was that she told Him all that she had ever thought, or

[1] Jean Ingelow.

wished, or intended in all her life, although she said nothing at all; and that He opened all things to her, and showed her that everything was well, and no one forgotten, and that the things she would have told Him were nearer His heart than hers, and those to whom she wanted to be sent were in His own hands. But whether this passed with words or without words she could not tell. Her soul expanded under His eyes like a flower. It opened out, it comprehended and felt and knew. . . . And then He laid a hand upon her head, which seemed to fill her with currents of strength and joy.[1]

That hour for brevity a moment seemed,
For benediction, ages [2]

When she had recovered a little from her rapture, she rose from her knees, and stood still for a little, to be sure which way she was to go. And she was not aware what guided her, but yet turned her face in the appointed way without any doubt. For doubt was now gone away for ever, and the fear that once gave her so much trouble lest she might not be doing what was best. . . . For this is what always happens in that country when you meet the Lord, that you instantly know what it is that He would have you to do. . . . And her whole being was instinct with such lightness of strength and life that it did not matter to her how far she went, nor what she carried, nor if the way was easy or hard.[3]

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.
[3] M. W. Oliphant.

O ravishment unspeakable,
With which their Lord they greet!
With love's surprised bewilderment
They cast them at His feet:
No Day of Judgment grand and dread,
No *dies iræ* this,
But grand, imposing vestibule
To their immortal bliss;—

The bliss of quick obedience
To His low-whispered will,
The bliss of holy idleness
When He shall bid: Stand still:
The rapture of a chieftain's soul
When He to arms shall call,—
Hope's jubilant expectancy
Of triumph over all.[1]

There were other ways in which we saw the King in His beauty, and felt Him in His love. Sometimes we saw Him at a distance, going about His Father's business, or talking with others; then He "turned and looked on" us, and oh, the power and wonder of that look! its indescribable sweetness, its perfect comprehension, its thrilling inspiration! Sometimes He not only looked, but smiled. And all the air around, and all the heart within, were alight and aglow with the warmth and brightness of that smile! Under its radiance the heart upon which it fell melted with rapture unspeakable.

[1] Rev. Denis Wortman.

And in still another way we saw the King not only in His beauty, but in His glory. St. John tells us in the last of his visions of the New Jerusalem that he "saw no temple there," but in the earlier visions a temple is mentioned more than once. And in every town and village of Paradise there is a large temple-like building, and also a vast outdoor amphitheatre wherein the people assemble either to listen to some one of the great teachers and thinkers who are commissioned to instruct them, or to join in glad worship of the Triune God. It is something inconceivably thrilling when these throngs join in singing hymns and anthems. Often choirs of angels unite their voices and instruments with ours,—hovering over us in the great dome of the temple or the still greater dome of the sky; now listening to us, now singing by themselves, now all joining in a chorus that seems to fill not only the surrounding spaces, but to float out into the distance, to be taken up and carried on by other thousands and tens of thousands of rapt and loving souls. Then, as the music grows more and more thrillingly sweet, the Lord Himself enters and stands before us for a few moments, letting His glory shine out upon us until our dazzled eyes sink, our heads droop like flowers overladen with dew, our hearts thrill with an inexpressible rapture of love and adoration.

And sometimes beside Him stands another Form, as like His as twin to twin, yet with a certain difference,—a dove-like gentleness and mildness of mien, a glance at once appealing, encouraging, and penetrating, and an underlying energy and power that

we feel to the very core of our being. On earth most of us had thought of the Holy Spirit as an influence rather than a person; when, therefore, we first saw Him as a distinct Person, and felt Him as a distinct personality, we were surprised and confused. But soon we began to recognize a certain familiarity in His presence; just as, not having seen the Christ, we had loved Him, so, not having known the Holy Spirit, we had loved Him also. We began to understand how much we had owed to His loving ministrations,—nay, how much we owed to them *now*.[1]

We are apt, almost unconsciously, to confine our thoughts of the Holy Spirit's working to the earthly stage of our existence. . . . We fail to recognize the continuity and the extension of His operations in the invisible world. . . . And yet our blessed Lord's promise is that the Holy Ghost shall abide with His Church for ever. . . . The human spirit is surely the special sphere of the working of the Spirit of God, His own secret dwelling-place, His congenial home. "He dwelleth in you, and shall be in you." And when that spirit is disentangled from the flesh, may we not say that it passes more entirely into the Holy Spirit's keeping, to be guided and illuminated, and purified "more and more unto the perfect day"?[2]

Felix had but lately arrived in the Garden. Those who had met and welcomed him—dear ones of the olden time, where time was—had left him to himself for a space. He was sitting in a kind of bower,

[1] Julian L. Mackensie. [2] J. P. F. Davidson.

looking at a bed of flowers that seemed to smile him a welcome, so bright and sweet and full of life they were. They reminded him of a garden on the earth in which it was his pleasure to work or dream when business hours were over; and though it was as naught in beauty and delightsomeness to this, its memory was dear to him; and his thoughts wandered back to scenes and figures to which it had been a pleasant background.

He suddenly recollected himself—not with a start, as he might have done in the old life,—or, rather, he was recalled to himself by a gentle but irresistible influence. Some one was looking at him across the flowers. Eyes clear, soft, yet penetrating; a face calm and sweet, yet full of latent energy and power; a figure tall, strong, majestic, yet lithe and graceful; made up a personality that set him all a-tremble with awe and a vague delight. "Who is it?" he asked himself inwardly. "It is—no, it is not the Christ— It is—can it be?—" he sank on his knees and bowed his head,—"it must be the Holy Ghost, the Comforter."

The voice was very sweet that answered his thought,—if it were indeed a voice, and not simply a breath. "Yes; I am He. I come to thee because thou hast a clear conception and recognition of me as a Person, strong for help and comfort. Most of earth's children know me not, they seldom think of me, or they think but vaguely. It does not really matter. The Father, the Son, and I are one. Who loves One, loves All; who serves One, serves All. But when a child of earth comes hither who has

really known Me and prayed to Me, clearly recognizing my office and personality, then I come to greet and bless that child."

Felix had lifted his eyes to the Spirit's as He spoke, taking from them—he knew not how—such rich draughts of joy, and peace, and love that his whole being was flooded with rapture. As the voice ceased, he bowed his head again; he felt strong, gentle hands laid upon it; and "The blessing of the Father, Son, and Spirit, be with thee now and evermore" was softly breathed over him.

When he lifted his head, the Spirit had vanished; but he left behind Him such a sense of energy and inspiration, of will and power, that Felix rose to his feet, and immediately set out to find something to *do*. He was no longer content to dream and enjoy. He wanted work,—real, active, hard work; he wanted to put the new life and love to use. Nothing less would satisfy him now![1]

I have said that the Holy Spirit was as like the Saviour as twin to twin; seeing them apart—that is, at first—we sometimes mistook One for the Other. Seeing them together, there was no difficulty; we felt the subtle difference, even while we felt the entire oneness. And here, too, as on earth, the Holy Spirit was the Revealer. Never did we see our Lord in His beauty, His glory, and His majesty, as when the Spirit was near. Then, indeed, our hearts burned within us; our souls melted with emotions ineffable.[2]

[1] Martin Worth. [2] Julian L. Mackensie.

Then "Glory to the Father, to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit," rang aloud
Throughout all Paradise; then with the song
My spirit reeled, so passing sweet the strain.
And what I saw was equal ecstasy;
One universal smile it seemed of all things,—
Joy past compare—gladness unutterable—
Imperishable life of peace and love—
Exhaustless riches and unmeasured bliss.[1]

[1] Dante.

The Many Mansions

O Paradise! O Paradise!
I greatly long to see
The special place my dearest Lord
Is destining for me.

F. W. Faber.

"I cannot bear to think of dying," said one, "for I have so much to live for!"

"Ah, but there is so much more to die for!" was the answer.

J. W.

Heaven is large, and affords space for all modes of love and fortitude.

Emerson.

I cannot overrate the beauty of His promise.

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

IX

WHEN Christ said to His disciples, and through them to mankind, "In my Father's house are many mansions," the statement was clearly not in accordance with the popular idea of Heaven, or Paradise,—a vast place filled with angels and saints, all occupied in much the same way, and leading a nearly uniform life.[1]

Our Lord tells us that, on the contrary, Heaven is not one common abode for angels and sanctified human beings, but a realm of many dwelling-places, suited to a great variety of capacities and characters. And He adds that this is so much in accordance with right and reason, so natural a view to take, that He would have made a special revelation of the fact if it were otherwise: "If it were not so, I would have told you." . . . The Old Testament constantly speaks of heaven in the plural. . . . "The heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee," says Solomon, in his great prayer at the dedication of the Temple. . . . St. Peter, too, in his Pentecostal sermon, builds up an argument on the fact that "David had not ascended into the heavens," and St. Stephen in his dying speech declares, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man

[1] Leonard Mason.

standing on the right hand of God." St. Peter speaks of himself as having been "caught up to the third heaven," which he presently identifies with Paradise. And the highest authority of all, our Lord's own prayer, recognizes the plurality of heaven in the words, as they ought to be rendered, "Our Father, who art in the heavens." [1]

These things being so, and remembering that Scripture depicts that land with imagery borrowed from both city and country,—remembering, too, Milton's

> "What if earth
> Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
> Each to the other like, more than on earth is thought,"—

perhaps we shall not go far astray in picturing to ourselves those heavens, those "many mansions," as a vast kingdom, comprehending numerous towns, villages, and cities; of which the New Jerusalem, the City of God, is the magnificent capital, the seat of government, the centre of influence, the home of angels, where God has His throne, where He is especially manifest, and from whence He sends out His messengers on errands of light, love, joy, peace, and blessing to the farthest point in His realm. And as on earth many persons are content to have their homes, at least for a part of their lives, in more or less remote towns and villages, with occasional trips to the national capital, to see its sights, catch its tone, mingle with the court and kneel in the pres-

[1] Rev. Malcolm MacColl.

ence of their king, just so it may be in Heaven, at least in that part of it which is called Paradise, or the Intermediate State. Or, shall we say that, as many persons pass their youth, perhaps a large portion of their lives, in places more or less secluded and rural, until, having filled lower positions with honor and efficiency, they are called to higher ones, to sit in the councils of their king and to help him in administering affairs of importance,—so it may be in the heavenly kingdom.[1]

But it is not likely that any one or more of our interpretations will exhaust the meaning of our Lord's "many mansions." He may have meant not only dwelling or tarrying places, but stages and spheres of spiritual life,—the long series of growths and advancements that will mark the soul's upward progress throughout eternity. And each stage will doubtless include all of bliss and loveliness that is then possible to the soul. It will be happy according to its capacity; but its capacity will be for ever expanding, so that while there is no satiety nor discontent in the present, the future will be bright with the radiancy of hope and expectation.

We may be sure, in short, that the many mansions comprise every sort of experience, training, possession, and companionship necessary for the culture, the pleasure, and the gradual perfecting of every soul that is permitted to enter them; and that the most enlightened imagination cannot outrun the blessed reality of the "place" which our Lord declared that He went to "prepare" for His people.

[1] John Worden.

"God is not this thing, nor that; He is all things," says a wise writer. Therefore we may conclude that Heaven, with the infinite riches at His disposal, is not this or that, but all things. While it will contain much that is quite beyond the reach of our imaginations, it will also contain much that we can imagine, love, and long for.[1]

Truly that great Householder, whose house is the universe, will be no man's debtor, but will bring forth from His treasures things new and old. All holy desires shall be fulfilled; nor shall even mere blameless desires be unaccounted of, please God.[2]

So shall we all, who groan in this,
Find in that new life's perfectness
Our own peculiar Heaven of bliss,—

More glorious than our faith believed,
Brighter than dreams our hope has weaved,
Better than all our hearts conceived.[3]

There are many mansions. Heaven is a large place. It has a great population. In it are all the old inhabitants who have never known any other home, who began their life and have continued it there. In it are already gathered many new inhabitants, many souls redeemed from death and sanctified by the Spirit. And the colonization is to go on; the generations of time will augment it; the people of every land will send their emigrants to it; the world's growing population will more and more

[1] L. M. Wooster. [2] Christina G. Rossetti. [3] Phebe Cary.

set their faces toward it: and by and by, in the golden ages that are predicted, all living men may become candidates for its immortality. There will be room for all. No pent-up city, no contracted country, invites the saints.[1]

A lovely city in a lovely land,
  Whose citizens are lovely, and whose King
  Is Very Love, to whom all angels sing;
To whom all saints sing crowned; their sacred band
Saluting Love with palm-branch in their hand:
  Thither all doves on gold and silver wing
  Flock home through agate windows glistering
Set wide, and where pearl gates wide open stand.
A bower of roses is not half so sweet,
  A cave of diamonds doth not glitter so,
    Nor Lebanon is fruitful set thereby:
    And thither thou, beloved, and thither I
  May set our heart and set our face, and go,
Faint yet pursuing, Home on tireless feet.[2]

It was a great city, but it was not like the cities that she had seen. . . . The buildings were all beautiful, of every style and form that it is possible to think of, yet in great harmony, as if every man had followed his own taste, yet all had been so combined and grouped by the master architect that each individual feature enhanced the effect of the rest.

And the streets were full of pleasant sound, and of crowds coming and going, and the commotion of much business and many things to do. And this movement, and the brightness of the air, and the

[1] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.

wonderful things that were to be seen on every side, made the little Pilgrim gay, so that she could have sung with pleasure as she went along. And all who met her smiled, and every group exchanged greetings as they passed along, all knowing each other. Many of them, as might be seen, had come there as she did, to see the wonders of the beautiful city; and all who lived there were ready to tell them whatever they desired to know, and show them the finest houses and the greatest pictures. And this gave a feeling of holiday and pleasure which was delightful beyond description, for all the busy people about were full of sympathy with the strangers, bidding them welcome, inviting them to their houses, making the warmest fellowship. And friends were meeting continually on every side; but the Pilgrim had no sense that she was forlorn for being alone, for all were friends; and it pleased her to watch the others and see how one turned this way and one another, every one finding something that delighted him above all other things,[1]

> Good without fear of evil beckoning them,
> All pleasure without pain refreshing them.[2]

The city lieth four-square, and the height is equal to its length or its breadth. Or, if not literally so, yet the mountain summits within the city walls are of such altitude as to readily suggest the comparison alluded to by the Revelator. . . .

Along the vales of waving palms, by the dancing

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

waves of rippling rivers, or past the shining temples on the heights, among the groves and by the sparkling fountains we wandered. Many were the gates of pearl that we saw; they were always open, inviting us to hospitable entertainment in grounds and mansions where we caught glimpses of white-robed throngs coming and going as upon some private festival occasion. Life-giving were the leaves we plucked, and greatly we desired to send them forth for the healing of the nations. And here and there we rose to great heights of green or jagged mountains; far up whose shadowless sides, rising in no light of the sun, we found that architecture which indicates the perpetual presence of the Lamb of God as the temple of His people. And there, in the ceaseless day, we could but raise our triumphal songs.[1]

That New Jerusalem has a wall expresses to me a local, distinct, defined Heaven (at least, as by a condescension to our present faculties),—not indiscriminate as were the waters before the formation of a firmament, nor without form like void chaos, but a genuine *home*, with recognized features and amiabilities of a home meet for them who have weaned themselves from earth on the promise and faith of Heaven. For now we, too, "desire a better country, that is, an heavenly," which is far from not desiring any country at all; the home-feeling being congruous with that other human craving not to be unclothed but to be clothed upon.[2]

[1] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires.*

[2] Christina G. Rossetti.

If *home* means much here,—if it is one of the few really God-given names, holding in it hopes, memories, sacred passions which survive changes, which keep their brightness and strength through wanderings and colonizations, so that it is always where the heart is and where those whom the heart loves are,—its transference to a better world will not destroy it, will only ennoble and transfigure it. It will mean more on that side than ever it meant on this. It will carry with it all that it had here, and it will have added to it all that it will gain there. It will only gain by the transmigration, as the costly materials gain in value and beauty by the processes which develop them into their own purity and brilliance.[1]

I have a heavenly home,
To which my soul may come,
And where for ever safe it may abide;
Firmly and sure it stands,
That house not made with hands,
And garnished as a chamber for a bride.

'T is such as angels use,
Such as good men would choose;
It hath all fair and pleasant things in sight;
Its walls as white and fine
As polished ivory shine,
And through its windows comes celestial light.

'T is builded fair and good
In the similitude
Of the most royal palace of a king;

[1] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D.

And sorrow may not come
Into that heavenly home,
Nor pain, nor death, nor any evil thing.

Near it that stream doth pass
Whose waters, clear as glass,
Make glad the City of our God with song;
Whose banks are fair as those
Whereon stray milk-white does,
Feeding among the lilies all day long.

And friends who once were here
Abide in dwellings near.[1]

If this aspect of Heaven as the city of homes be cherished, we may say that from those dwellings old friends will look forth for those who are expected, doors will be opened by those who have welcomed the new-comers a thousand times before, the voices will have the tone and ring of the old home-life, and the hands that will clasp their hands will be those that have held and helped them in the love and labor of the earthly life. Your little child, whose solitary going seemed so sad to you, will be taken into arms that will hold it with a caress as loving as your own. Your aged mother, for whom you ministered with a love as constant as the hours, and who clung to the old home to the last, will find a dearer home open to her footsteps, and old friends offering to her the cheerful hospitalities of the heavenly world. Your beloved friend, with whom you walked on the long way of earthly service, and whose change-

[1] Phebe Cary.

less love was the one true thing in which you could always confide, will wait through the lingering years for your coming, and will introduce you to the dwelling which the Lord has prepared for your re-united life.[1]

Come Home with me, belovèd!
  Each in that house shall have
His own peculiar chamber,
  Filled with the gifts He gave—
The mansion's Lord, our Father,—
  While sons and princes there
Each royally with others
  His blessedness shall share.[2]

On every side, amid encircling trees and vine, Spirita saw beautiful homes; some large and others small, some stately and others comparatively lowly, some elaborately ornamented and others quite simple; yet each had its own exceeding charm, each had a singular air of being perfectly suited to its occupants,—"prepared," she bethought herself, with a thrill at her heart,—so that it would be impossible to be otherwise than contented and happy in any one of them. As she passed by these homes, she caught glimpses of a beautiful home-life running its pleasant course within; for all stood open, all seemed ready to receive and welcome a guest at any moment. And why not? for in this life there was no longer any hurry nor any necessity for concealment; there was leisure enough for every demand, and the whole life

[1] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D. [2] Lucy Larcom.

was pure and lovely enough to be frank and free. And prying, and gossip, and idlers wasting their own and others' time, were no more.

It made her heart swell with gladness to see and know these things, and she wondered a little if any such home were waiting for herself, and when and how she would find it; yet the wonder was without either sadness or impatience, neither of these emotions having any existence in the paths of Paradise. There—at last!—it was easy, it was involuntary and pleasant, to subordinate one's personal will to the will of the Father and the Christ.[1]

There thy will shall ever be one with Me; it shall not covet any outer or selfish thing.

There none shall withstand thee, none shall complain of thee, none shall stand in thy way; but all things there thou canst desire will be altogether present, and shall refresh thy whole affection, and fill it up to the brim.[2]

What was most for His eternal glory whom we loved,
And for our brethren's purest happiness,
Fulfilled all hearts with rapture to the brim,
And more than filled,—they overflowed with love,
And drank in light till they could hold no more,—
All full, though fulness not the same to all,
As dewdrops, fountains, streams, and argent lakes,
Albeit with diverse breadth and brilliancy,
Reflect one rising sun.[3]

[1] Justin L. Mather. [2] Thomas à Kempis.
[3] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

In the "many mansions" there is no setting sun; "there shall be no night there." In this world night is as necessary as day. Work or play long continued brings weariness, and human weariness needs stated periods of rest under conditions of silence and subdued light such as night provides. Night, moreover, represents to us separation, sorrow, doubt, ignorance, hindrance, and error, none of which have any existence in the Better Country. That "there shall be no night there" means that there will be neither actual nor metaphorical darkness; it means security and certainty; it means clear sight, mental serenity, unhampered endeavor and unquestioning faith. It need not mean that rest, cessation from work, cannot be enjoyed at will;—we are told that God rested after a period of creation. We are not told that He was weary, nor that the light wherewith He is clothed as with a garment was anywise darkened. And it is not to be supposed that the light of Paradise, the light which "the Lord giveth," the light of Himself and the Lamb, is incompatible with the most perfect rest. He who tempers the wind to the shorn earthly lamb will know how to temper His light to the eyes that look upon it. "Always enough; never too much" will be the rule for light, as for all other things in the heavenly mansions. The happiness that is to be eternal needs not to run anywhere into excess.[1]

It is no flaming lustre, made of light,
No sweet consent or well-tuned harmony,

[1] Lynn M. Woods.

Ambrosia for to feed the appetite,
Or flowery odor mixed with spicery,
No soft embrace or pleasure bodily;
And yet it is a kind of inward feast,
A harmony that sounds within the breast,
An odor, light, embrace, in which the soul doth rest;
A heavenly feast no hunger can consume,
A light unseen, yet shines in every place,
A sound no time can steal, a sweet perfume
No winds can scatter, an entire embrace
That no satiety can e'er unlace.[1]

My earth-life had been one of many changes. I had never lived in any one place long enough to have a true home,—a place with a rich present, a dear past, and a bright future,—though I had often longed for one. Occasionally, having some architectural knowledge and taste, I amused myself by drawing plans of the house that I should like to build and own, altering and improving it from time to time, as my knowledge grew and my taste improved. It was not a palatial dwelling,—I cared for none such,—I merely sought to make it thoroughly convenient and beautiful, the natural outcome of the wishes and needs of my household—a home that would suit us perfectly, and probably no one else. I called it my cottage-in-the-air, and in my secret soul I named it "Heart's Ease," for such I was sure it would be if ever I succeeded in making it anything more substantial than a pleasant dream. What was my surprise, when I was guided to my home in

[1] Giles Fletcher, 1586.

the many mansions, to find my dream become a reality, exactly as I had dreamed it, except that it was built of finer materials, with lovelier decorations, than I had dared even to dream of. My heart thrilled with gratitude to find my heavenly home thus standing as the expression, not only of my own tastes and desires, but also of that infinite Love which—nay, *Who*—is the true Heart's Ease, the everlasting Home of the Soul.

The instruments by which this work of love had been wrought—for here, as on earth, the Lord works by instruments—were two dear friends who knew of my fancy, with such help as they needed. For the building of homes for expected arrivals is one of the handicrafts of Paradise.[1]

Sometimes, as I passed a group of the heavenly inhabitants talking together, I noticed that they spoke a language unfamiliar to me, but so sweet and rich in tone and rhythm that it was like music to my ears. And when I asked what it was, they told me it was the heavenly language which all comers were expected to learn in due season, though they were not suffered to forget their old, familiar earth language, for they must be able to meet and greet new-comers and talk with them in a tongue that they could understand. And when I asked why a new language was necessary, one of them said:

"Partly because it is well to have a universal language that every one can speak; for you know the inhabitants of this country are made up not only of

[1] Marcus Werner.

every tribe and nation on the face of the earth, but of the other planets also. And there is a still better reason. Surely you remember that there were many times when your earth-language was inadequate to the expression of your feelings, when there seemed to be no words for some deepest love, or longing, or sorrow. And you must also remember how easy it was to misunderstand what was said, to get false impressions, or to be doubtful if it meant exactly what appeared on the surface. Nothing of that is possible in the heavenly tongue. It expresses every shade of thought and every depth of feeling. It is not possible to put an innuendo or a double meaning in it. All is clear, beautiful, and harmonious. And it has words for things that you have not yet learned. It must be so, for it is the language of the highest Heaven, of that City of God whither we all go sometimes,—it is the language of the angels, and of the Lord Christ." [1]

Their language is too mighty
To be translated now;
The great Apostle heard it,
Yet could not make us know
The glory of its meaning,
The beauty of its tone,
But panted for the hour
When it should be his own;

Panted for the "far better,"
The far, far better land,

[1] L. M. Wooster.

The Presence of Christ Jesus,
The joy at His right hand;
For he had seen that region
While yet in mortal guise,—
Guest in the many mansions,
The homes of Paradise.[1]

Spirita and her new acquaintances, after passing through many fine streets and seeing many beautiful houses, came to a lovely home, completely covered with flowering vines. It stood on the banks of a clear, shining river, the dancing ripples of which seemed to sing a low song of praise to the sweet air. The walls and ceiling of the room into which they entered appeared to be made of interlacing vines in full bloom, but Spirita saw after a moment that they were made of a glass-like substance of such crystalline purity that the external leaves and flowers showed as plainly as if there were nothing between. And there were cool floors of marble, and many tables and books and pictures, and easy chairs and soft couches; and on one of the last the lady placed her guest, and in a beautiful cup brought her an amber-tinted beverage which was a marvel of sweetness and refreshment.[2]

And the little Pilgrim looked round on the beautiful houses and the fair gardens, and she said:

"You live here? and do you come home at night, —but I do not mean night, I mean when your work

[1] Caroline M. Noel. [2] Justin L. Mather.

is done? And are they poets like you that dwell all about in these pleasant places, and the——"

She would have said "the children," but stopped, not knowing if perhaps it might be unkind to speak of the children when she saw none there.

Upon this the lady smiled once more, and said: "The door stands always open, so that no one is shut out, and the children can come and go as they will. They are children no longer, and they have their appointed work, like him and me."

"And you are always among those you love?" the little Pilgrim said; upon which they smiled again and said, "We all love each other"; and the lady held her hand in both of hers, and caressed it, and softly laughed and said:

"You know only the little language. When you have been taught the other, you will learn many beautiful things."

After this the little Pilgrim went out again into the beautiful city, feeling in her heart that everything was a mystery, and that the days would never be long enough for all that had yet to be learned, but knowing that this, too, was the "little language," and pleased with the sweet thought of so much that was to come. For one had whispered to her as she went out that the new tongue, and every explanation, as she was ready for it, would come to her through one of those she loved best, which is the usage of that country. And when the stranger has no one there that is very dear, then it is an angel who teaches the greater language, and that is what often happens to the children who are brought up in

that heavenly place. . . . And now she found herself at a distance from the great city, which shone in the light with its beautiful towers and roofs and all its monuments, softly fringed with trees and set in a heavenly firmament. . . . The path lay along the bank of the river which flowed beside her and made the air full of music, and a soft wind blew across the running stream and breathed in her face and refreshed her, and the birds sang in all the trees. And as she passed through the villages the people came out to meet her . . . and everywhere she found friends, and kind voices gave her greeting. And she perceived that the village folk were a simple folk, not learned and wise like those she had left; and that though they lived in sight of the great city, and showed every stranger the beautiful view of it and the glory of its towers, yet few of them had ever travelled there; for they were so content with their fields, and their river, and the birds singing, and their simple life, that they wanted no change; though it pleased them to receive the little Pilgrim, and they brought her into their villages rejoicing, and called every one to see her. And they told her that they had all been poor in the old time, and had never rested; so that now it was the good Father's pleasure that they should enjoy great peace and consolation among the fresh-breathing fields and on the river-side, so that there were many who even now had little occupation but to think of the Father's goodness, and to rest. And they told her how the Lord Himself would come among them, and sit down under a tree, and tell them one of His par-

ables, and make them more happy than words could say. . . .

And some of them led her into their gardens, to show her their flowers, and to tell how they had begun to study and learn how colors were changed and forms perfected, and the secrets of the growth and of the germ, of which they had been ignorant. And others arranged themselves in choirs, and sang to her delightful songs of the fields, and accompanied her out upon her way, singing and answering to each other. The difference between the simple folk and the greatness of the others made the little Pilgrim wonder and admire; and she loved them in their simplicity, and turned back many a time to wave her hand to them, and to listen to the lovely simple singing as it went farther and farther away. It had an evening tone of rest and quietness, and of protection and peace. "He leadeth me by the green pastures, and beside the still waters," she said to herself; and her heart swelled with pleasure to think it was those who had been so old, and so weary and poor, who had this rest to console them for their sorrow.[1]

Ye blessèd souls, grown richer by your spoil,
Whose loss, though great, is cause of greater gains,
Here may your weary spirits rest from toil,
Spending your endless evening that remains
Among those white flocks and celestial trains
That feed upon their Shepherd's eyes, and frame
That heavenly music of so wondrous flame,
Psalming aloud the holy honours of His name.[2]

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Giles Fletcher.

Hear what God, the Lord, hath spoken:
O my people, faint and few,
Comfortless, afflicted, broken,
Fair abodes I build for you;
Scenes of heartfelt tribulation
Shall no more perplex your ways;
You shall name your walls salvation,
And your gates shall all be praise.

There, like streams that feed the garden,
Pleasures without end shall flow;
For the Lord, your faith rewarding,
All His bounty shall bestow. . . .
God shall rise and, shining o'er you,
Change to day the gloom of night;
He, the Lord, shall be your glory,
God your everlasting light.[1]

So, passing on from town to town, from village to village, from places sweet with peacefulness to places thrilling with wondrous activity, from lovely landscape to beautiful street, from valley to hilltop and from hilltop to plain, from people of learned minds and lofty pursuits to people of simple tastes and lives, from the finest art to the loveliest nature,—not knowing whether weeks, or months, or days only, were thus spent, for here time had ceased to be,—I felt that I was just beginning to understand what our Lord meant when He said: "In my Father's house are many mansions." Beginning only, for all that I had seen only gave me to know that there was

[1] William Cowper.

much more that I had not seen, that my mind was not yet sufficiently trained to take in. I was still a neophyte in the new world, a child in the new home.[1]

[1] Louis M. Woodford.

Recognition

When the holy angels meet us,
As we go to join their band,
Shall we know the friends that greet us
In the glorious spirit-land?
Shall we see the same eyes shining
On us as in days of yore?
Shall we feel their dear arms twining
Fondly round us as before?
Shall we know each other there?

Rev. R. Lowry.

Common sense simply says, "Of course we shall," and that ends the controversy. That we shall know each other better than we do now goes without saying.

Rev. George H. Hepworth.

Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside;
And I shall know him when we meet.

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good:
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of love on earth?

Tennyson.

X

WE are taught to conceive of heaven as a state of perfect knowledge. The Apostle Paul is delighted to indulge in these sublime anticipations. "Now," he says, "we see through a glass, darkly; but then, face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know as I am known." . . . The knowledge of glorified spirits will be as a golden key to open to them unnumbered sources of enjoyment hidden from us; can it be supposed that this source of enjoyment —the knowledge and society of those glorified saints dear to them in this world—will be one which the key of heavenly intelligence will be unable to unlock?[1]

The objectors claim that the bodies of the saints will be so entirely changed that recognition will be impossible. Instead of material bodies they will have spiritual bodies; and how can we discern persons in spiritual bodies? they ask. But will not the spiritual body even more fitly than the earthly one enable us to recognize the soul we so well know? Will not the spiritual discernment recognize the person just as easily in the spiritual body as the material eye would recognize the person in the material body? Besides, recognition is not through the ex-

[1] Rev. Robert Meek.

ternal form only. Blind men know each other. Friends discern one another in the dark. We know our friends though a screen may divide us from them. There is mental recognition.[1]

There is in the convenience of common language a very free use of the word "spirit" that goes to the bottom of the deepest truth. When brought into close contact with people, we often feel their spirit before we have any other knowledge of their character. Something—which in our language has no better name than "his spirit"—breathes an impress upon us which can rarely be defined, of which the person himself is scarcely conscious, but which comes out of his character from his inner being. It is "his spirit," the spirit of his human spirit, the human activity of his immortal spirit. . . . It is as subtle as electricity, but with photographic accuracy it reveals, not what we intend to be, but the very secret of our being.[2]

Even here, we know our friends far less by their physical peculiarities than by this subtle, unconscious revelation of themselves.[3]

Modern science tells you that the particles composing your body change, not once in seven years as was formerly stated, but in about one year. Yet you know beyond the possibility of doubt that *you* remain unchanged. You can recall scenes, faces, conversations of years ago. You can even recollect the illnesses and the pains that that poor, vanished

[1] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D. [2] Rev. Joseph M. Hodson.
[3] Lucy Larcom.

body suffered. Something — call it spirit, soul, identity, self—what you will—has endured through all the changes of the body, individual, self-conscious, indestructible. Passing into the other world, it is "not a drop swallowed in an ocean, a flame merged in a conflagration," but what it was, that it is, and that it will be for ever and ever.[1]

Not only "St. Peter will for ever be St. Peter, and St. Paul, St. Paul, each with his continuous experience which none can share with him at first hand," and which has made him what he is and what in his essence he shall be for ever; but the mother who passed on to the Better Country while you were in your youth, or the sister whose white face in her coffin first made you acquainted with death, or the brother who shared the sports of your boyhood and the pursuits of your manhood, will each retain enough of the old blended with the new to make recognition as inevitable as it is delightful.[2]

And now my heart was eager all to meet
The eyes and voice of him who onward led,
When he stood sudden and, with arrested feet,
I also. Like a half-sunned orb his head
Slow turned the bright side: Lord, the brother-smile!
That ancient human glory on me shed
In which Thou camest forth to wile
Unto Thy bosom every laboring soul. . . .
"Brother," he said, "thou art like me now, whole
And sound and well; for the keen pain and stir
Uneasy, and the grief that came to us all—

[1] J. L. Markham. [2] John Worden.

In that we knew not how the wine and myrrh
  Could ever from the vinegar and gall
Be parted—are deep sunk, yea, drowned in God;
  And yet the Past not folded like a pall,
But breathed upon, like Aaron's withered rod,
  By a sweet light that brings the blossoms through."

. . . . . .

Something my brother said to me like this,
  But how unlike it also think, I pray!
His eyes were music, and his smile a kiss;
  Himself the word, his speech was but a ray
In the clear nimbus that with verity
  Of absolute utterance made a home-born day
Of truth about him, lamping solemnly.
  And when he paused there came a swift repose,
Too high, too still to be called ecstasy,—
  A purple silence, lanced through in the close
By such keen thought, it grew, suddenly smiling,
  Sheen silver in a heart of burning rose.
It was a glory full of reconciling,
  Of perfect faithfulness and love and pain,
Of tenderness and care, and mother-wiling
  Back to the bosom of a speechless gain.[1]

"Stay with me till He comes, oh, stay with me!" the woman cried, clinging to her arm.

"Unless another is sent," the little Pilgrim said. And it was nothing to her that the air was less bright there, for her mind was so full of light that . . . she had no longing to return, nor to shorten the

[1] George Macdonald.

way, but went by the lower road sweetly, with the stranger hanging upon her. Thus they went on, and the Pilgrim told her . . . everything that came into her heart. And so full was she of the great things that she had to say, that it was a surprise to her when suddenly the woman took away her clinging hand and flew forward with a cry of joy. The little Pilgrim stood still to see, and on the path before them was a child, coming towards them singing, with a look that is never seen but on the faces of children who have come here early, and who behold the face of the Father, and have never known fear nor sorrow. The woman flew and fell at the child's feet, and he put his hand upon her, and raised her up, and called her "Mother."

"Now she needs me no longer," said the Pilgrim.[1]

Yes, we may be sure that if friends and relations meet in that kingdom of bliss, they will know one another again. There will be mutual recognition, and they will derive from their reunion new elements of joy and gladness. They will meet where everything that clouded life on earth will have disappeared, and everything that gladdened it will be purified and intensified.[2]

"Mother!" cried the Pilgrim with such a cry of joy that it echoed all about in the sweet air, and flung herself on the veiled lady, and drew the veil from her face, and saw that it was she. And with this sight came a revelation that flooded her soul

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

with happiness. For the face that had been old and feeble was old no longer, but fair in the maturity of day; and the figure that had been bent and weary was full of a tender majesty, and the arms that clasped her about were warm and soft with love and life. And all that had changed their relations in the other days and made the mother in her weakness seem as the child, and transferred all protection and strength to the daughter, was gone for ever; and the little Pilgrim beheld in a rapture one who was her sister and equal, yet ever above her; more near than any, though all were so near; one of whom she was herself a part, yet another, and who knew all her thoughts and the way of them before they arose in her. And to see her face as in the days of her prime, and her eyes so clear and wise, and to feel once more that which is different from the love of all, that which is still most sweet where all is sweet —the love of one—was like a crown to her in her happiness.'

Nor need we trust to fancy alone for examples of the recognition of kindred and friends in the future life. Turning to Holy Writ, we find that Dives and Lazarus are represented as knowing each other, even across the "great gulf" of separation; that the men of Nineveh and the "queen of the earth" would be known to each other; that the apostles would meet as acquaintances; that Martha would recognize her brother in the resurrection; that the martyrs would be no strangers to each other in the life to come;

[1] M. W. Oliphant.

and that Moses and Elias were seen conversing together in a way that argued familiar intercourse.[1]

Nor is there, in the heavens above or the earth beneath, any reason why the saints in Heaven should be kept ignorant of each other. Do we so misjudge God as to think that He would cast them into a barren, unsocial state, where former associations are utterly unknown, allowing them to be more ignorant in Heaven than they were upon the earth? Why do they not reason that, "if God give His Son, He will also, with Him, freely give us all things"?[2]

The fact that He has implanted an instinct, appetite, or desire in our nature shows that He has made provision for its legitimate gratification, as certainly as He has made the eye for light and the lungs for air. But if we are *not* to know our earthly friends after we part with them here, then God, contrary to His known character, has implanted deeply in our nature a universal expectation which is doomed to disappointment.[3]

O friends! no proof beyond this yearning,
This outreach of our souls we need;
God will not mock the hope He giveth,
No love He prompts shall vainly plead.

Then let us stretch our hands in darkness,
And call our loved ones o'er and o'er;
Sometime their arms shall close about us,
And the old voices speak once more.[4]

[1] Martin Worth. [3] Rev. Archibald McCullagh, D.D.
[2] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires.* [4] Whittier.

It is no new creature, no strange being, forgetful of the past, soaring out of the power and memory of the beautiful affections of the earthly home to the ethereal fellowship of God and angels, that will be raised from the dust to dwell in the new earth and under the new heavens, but the friend we loved here, whose mortal form and human love will have put on immortality.[1]

Therefore, though we may think of our loved and lost as retaining every charm of their human personality, every tenderness of human affection, we must beware of thinking of them as retaining, in their immortal state, any infirmity, or disfigurement, or disability of body or mind that may have hampered and burdened them in this life, whether caused by disease, or accident, or the paralyzing effects of old age.[2]

Think of them, rather . . . as having carried with them, indeed, all the gifts of matured experience and ripened wisdom which the slow years bring, but likewise as having left behind all the weariness of accomplished aims, the monotony of a formed character, the rigidity of limbs that have ceased to grow. Think of them as receiving from the hand of Christ much of which they were robbed by the lapse of years. Think of them as crowned with loving-kindness and satisfied with good things, so that their youth is renewed like the eagle's. Think of them as again joyous, with the joy of beginning a new career which has no term but the sum of all perfection in the likeness of the infinite God. They rise like the song-bird, aspiring to the heavens, circling

[1] Rev. Hugh Macmillan. [2] Jessie Norwood.

round and ever higher, which "singing still doth soar, and soaring ever singeth," up and up through the steadfast blue to the sun![1]

As for the children and youth,—those who went from us with all their precious possibilities of mind and heart close-folded within them as the beauty and fragrance of the rose are folded within the bud,—think of them as opening, in the cloudless sunshine and unending summer of the Heavenly Garden, into perfect and fadeless bloom, keeping always something of the grace and freshness of youth, and enough of the bud-time traits to be always recognizable when we go to them, while they delight our eyes and hearts with the sweetness and brightness of the lovely blossom.[2]

In the highest and fullest sense shall beauty then be given for ashes; and the revelation of the glory that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, shall be seen in the "little dust that here we overweep."[3]

One thing more deserves brief mention: In the Transfiguration of our Blessed Lord, the three privileged disciples who were with Him seem at once, amidst the splendors of that scene, to have known Moses and Elijah. The same Divine power which favored them with a vision of the other world gave them a supernatural conception of what they saw. And hence we may infer that, in the great Hereafter, there will not only be recognition of friends, but

[1] Alexander Maclaren, D.D. [2] Leonard Mason.
[3] Rev. Hugh Macmillan.

knowledge at once imparted of those whose faces we have never seen, but by whose examples or writings we may have been benefited. The myriads of the redeemed and sacred will make up but one family, each knowing and known by the other.[1]

There will be no need of formal introductions in Paradise.[2]

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. L. M.

Work in the Garden

Heaven, to be a place of happiness, must be a place of activity.

Henry Ward Beecher.

I am looking with an eager interest into the "undiscovered country," and leaving this earth with no regret except that I have not accomplished more work. But I don't doubt we shall keep on working.

Helen Hunt Jackson.

Nothing which we at present see would lead us to the thought of a solitary, unactive life hereafter.

Bishop Butler.

Labor, wide as the earth, has its summit in heaven.

Thomas Carlyle.

XI

PARADISE is so universally spoken and thought of as a place of rest that many regard it as a place of inactivity. But the rest predicated is doubtless mental and spiritual rest. Christ, when He said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest," promised not bodily rest, but "rest unto your souls." Physical rest He could not promise under the conditions of earth, but soul-rest He could and would give to all who truly believed in Him and lived in and by His light. It is not to be supposed that tired bodies are at all congruous with the conditions of Paradise; the material body sleeps in the grave and is certainly at rest, while the spiritual body is undoubtedly quite equal to all that is demanded of it, and is therefore at rest when most active. We all know that even in this world much congenial work can be done without weariness; it is the uncongenial work, the drudgery, the hurry, the anxiety, and the overwork that weary us,—things which, we trust, are all left behind when the spirit enters the gates of Paradise.[1]

Rest it may, rest it will, if it needs rest. But what is rest? Not idleness, but peace of mind. To rest from sin, from sorrow, from fear, from doubt, from care,—this is the true rest. Above all, it is to

[1] Julian L. Mackensie.

rest from the worst weariness of all—knowing one's duty and yet not being able to do it. This is true rest, the rest of God, Who works for ever and yet is at rest for ever; as the stars over our heads move for ever, thousands of miles each day, and yet are at perfect rest because they move orderly, harmoniously, fulfilling the law which God has given them. Perfect rest in perfect work,—that surely is the rest of blessed spirits till the final consummation of all things.[1]

"They rest not." I suppose that by *rest not* we may understand cease not, pause not, flag not; their endless worship being an endless contentment, their labor a labor of love, their exploration of unfathomable mysteries as it were a skylark's ever-ascending flight, yet even at the same moment as his sustained exaltation at his zenith on poised wings.[2]

Inaction is stagnation. Prolonged, it becomes deterioration. We cannot believe, we will not admit, that it is the rule of any considerable portion of life after death. "More life and fuller 't is we want," and fuller life can only mean more active, progressive, and beneficent life. Our faith is strong that we shall have it in the "Better Country."[3]

We believe, then, that in Paradise they work, but, unlike all earthly labor, the work they have to do is restful and satisfying. Here it matters not how willing the spirit of man may be, his flesh is always weak, and weakness brings with it a sense of weariness, and at least some measure of disappointment;

[1] Charles Kingsley. [2] Christina G. Rossetti. [3] John Worden.

but the whole effect upon us is changed when that consciousness of failure which marks all earthly endeavor is taken away, and we can feel sure that whatever we do will bear its fruit. Pascal felt the need of work to be so absolutely necessary for perfect happiness, that he did not hesitate to assert that the want of occupation for our moral energies in the future world would turn heaven into hell.[1]

And the youth answered: If it be
A place of inactivity,
It cannot be a heaven to me.

Surely its joy must be to lack
Those hindrances that keep us back
From rising on a shining track,

Where each shall feel his own true height,
Though in our place, and in our light,
We differ as the stars of night.[2]

It is impossible to conceive of man in a high and happy estate without an employment worthy of that estate, and in fact constituting its dignity and happiness. . . . What a restless, ardent, many-handed thing is genius even here below! How the highly endowed spirit searches about and tries its wings, now hither, now thither, in the vast realms of intellectual life! And if it be so here, with the body weighing upon us, with the clogs of worldly business and trivial interruption, what will it be there, where

[1] Rev. H. M. Luckock. [2] Phebe Cary.

everything will be fashioned and arranged for this express purpose,—that every highest employment may find its noblest expansion without let or hindrance?[1]

In entering heaven, ye have come to a busy place. We rest not day nor night, and yet we are not weary. Toil is but a joy to the sons and daughters of the Almighty. Perfect repose is found in the ceaseless activity of all our powers; every faculty is in frictionless action, intense and harmonious as the wheeling stars in their courses. Employment is the enjoyment of heaven. An idle air would weary the wings of the angels.[2]

None idle here: look where thou wilt, they all
Are active, all engaged in meet pursuit;
Not happy else. Hence is it that the song
Of heaven is ever new; for daily thus
And nightly new discoveries are made
Of God's unbounded wisdom, power, and love,
Which give the understanding larger room,
And swell the hymn with ever-growing praise.[3]

The probability that the rest of Paradise is not incompatible with activity is greatly strengthened by the fact that idleness would be such a needless waste. If anything is written plainly throughout the whole realm of nature, it is that no waste is allowed therein. It would appear to be self-evident, therefore, that in

[1] Henry Alford, D.D.
[2] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires.*
[3] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

God's heavenly economy millions of souls will not be obliged to remain idle and inert for the long period of time that must elapse before the consummation of all things. Moreover, by work, service, energy in this world, the faculties are sharpened, the capacities are enlarged, the mind is enriched, the character is broadened and solidified,—why should it not be so in the world to come? "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said Christ; can any one so construe that statement as to make it afford any ground for the conclusion that a time is coming when either He or His shall cease to work?

Another excellent reason for believing that there will be work and workers in the future world is the fact that men accomplish so little in this life in comparison with their desires and abilities. "For half a century," said Victor Hugo, "I have been writing my thoughts in prose, verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, ode, song,—I have tried them all. But I feel I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me." Theodore Parker's testimony is similar: "I am not afraid to die, but I wish I might carry on my work. I have only half used the powers that God gave me." Yet neither of these men died early in life; Victor Hugo lived to what is counted a ripe old age.[1]

It is the universal testimony of reason and experience that life is too short for man's unfolding. Threescore years and ten are barely sufficient for developing skill in the carriage of his body. This life avails for the drill of reason, memory, and judg-

[1] Julian Woodworth.

ment, and the rest of man's forty or more faculties must wait. . . . The climate here is too unfriendly and the summers too short for their unfolding. But from the noblest specimens of the great and good we may gain some intimation of their possibilities hereafter,—Shakespeare, disclosing fruition of reason only germinal in others; Webster or Burke, disclosing the skill with which all are to think or speak; Howard and Livingstone and Lincoln, revealing the heroism possible to all. But the vast majority end their career disappointed, marred, mutilated, defeated.[1]

Round us on every side are cramped, hindered, still-born lives,—merchants who should have been painters, clerks who should have been poets, laborers who should have been philosophers. Their talent is known to a few friends; they die, and the talent is buried in their coffin? Jesus says: No, it has at last been sown for the harvest; it will come into the open and blossom in another land. These also are being trained,—trained by waiting. They will get their chance; they will come into their kingdom

> "Where the days bury their golden suns,
> In the dear hopeful West."[2]

The "village Hampdens," the "mute, inglorious Miltons" who "died with all their music in them," the square pegs in round holes, the men and women who have been forced by stern necessity into uncongenial positions and employments, will there find

[1] N. D. Hillis. [2] Ian Maclaren.

all these crookednesses made straight. They will be given work to do, not only suited to their best powers, but to the continuous growth and development of those powers. Moreover, it is doubtless true that, when the work and the workers are suited to each other here, it will be continued hereafter,—"Things learned on earth will be practised in Heaven," only carried on to greater perfection and higher uses.[1]

The laws of harmony, for instance, with regard to music, may be understood in a deeper measure hereafter. The man of science, the artist, may be allowed to see hereafter the great principles on which Art and Science rest, so as to enter into them, and even practise them, yet more thoroughly and perfectly. In all the secular employments and tastes of your life, if they be healthy and pure, there may be,—nay, without a doubt there will be,—in very truth, a continuity.[2]

Do you think that an accident so insignificant as death, which is but a transitory thing in human existence, should deprive the scientist, the orator, the painter, the poet, of the superior qualities with which he had furnished his soul by his labor and perseverance? Do you believe that talents won by so much fatigue, suffering, self-sacrifice, and sorrow can be for ever lost to him and his fellow-creatures? It is impossible.[3]

Thou art not idle: In thy higher sphere
Thy spirit bends itself to loving tasks;

[1] Julia Wood. [2] Bishop Webb. [3] Louis Figuier.

And strength to perfect what it dreamed of here
Is all the crown of glory that it asks.[1]

The poet stood upon a beautiful pedestal, all sculptured in stone and with wreaths of living flowers hung on it; and when the crowd had gathered in front of him he began his poem. He told them it was not about this land, or anything that happened in it, which they knew as he did, but that it was a story of the old time, when men were walking in darkness, and when no one knew the true meaning of what he himself did, but all had to go on as if blindly, stumbling and groping with their hands. And "O brethren," he said, "though all is more beautiful and joyful here where we know, yet to remember the days when we knew not, and the way was all uncertain, and the end could not be seen from the beginning, is sweet and dear; and that which was done in the dim twilight should be celebrated in the day; and our Father Himself loves to hear of those who, having not seen, loved, and who learned without any teacher, and followed the light though they did not understand."

And then he told them the story of one that had lived in the old time, . . . of a man that was poor and sorrowful and alone, and how he loved and was not loved again, and trusted and was betrayed, and was tempted and drawn into the darkness, so that it seemed as if he must perish; but when hope was almost gone, turned again from the edge of despair, and confronted his enemies, and

[1] Lucy Larcom.

fought and conquered; and the people followed every word with great outcries of love and pity and wonder. For each one as he listened remembered his own career and that of his brethren in the old life. And there were others that were not of them who listened, some seated at the windows of the palaces, and some standing in the great square, whose bearing was more majestic, and who looked upon the crowd all smiling and weeping, with wonder and interest, but had no knowledge of the cause, and listened and gazed and observed as those who listen and are instructed in something beyond their knowledge. . . .

"I am one of those," said the lady, "that go back to the dear earth and gather up the tale of what our little brethren are doing. I have not to succor, like some others, but only to see and bring the news; and he makes them into poems, as you have heard; and sometimes the master painter will take one and make of it a picture and there is nothing so delightful to us as when we can bring back the news of beautiful things." . . .

And they walked along the street which was shining with color, and saw how the master painter had come back to his work, and was standing on the balcony where the little Pilgrim had been, and bringing out of the wall, under his hand, faces which were full of life, and which seemed to spring forth as if they had been hidden there. "Let us wait a little, and see him working," the poet said; and all round about the people stopped on their way and there

was a soft cry of pleasure and praise all through the beautiful street. And the painter, with whom the little Pilgrim had talked before, came and stood behind her as if he had been an old friend, and called out to her at every new touch to see how this and that was done. She did not understand it as he did, but she saw how beautiful it was, and she was glad to have seen the great painter as she had been glad to hear the great poet. And it seemed to her as if everything had happened well for her, and that no one had ever been so blessed before. . . .

After that it happened to the little Pilgrim to enter into another great palace where there were many people reading, and some sitting at desks and writing, and some consulting together, with many volumes stretched out open upon the tables. One of these, who was seated alone, looked up as she paused wondering at him, and smiled as every one did, and greeted her with such a friendly tone that the Pilgrim, who always had a great desire to know, came nearer to him and looked at the book, then begged pardon and said that she did not know that books were needed here. And he told her that he was one of the historians of the city where all the records of the world were kept, and that it was his business to work upon the great History, and to show what was the meaning of the Father in everything that happened, and how each event came in the right place.

"And do you get it out of books?" she asked.

"The books are the records," he said; "and there are many here that were never known to us in the

old days; for the angels love to look into such things, and they can tell us much, for they saw it; and in the great books they have kept there is much put down that was never in the books that we wrote, for then we did not know. We found out about the kings and the state, and tried to understand what great purposes they were serving; but even these we did not know, for those purposes were too great for us, not knowing the end from the beginning, and the hearts of men were too deep for us. We comprehended the evil sometimes, but never fathomed the good. And how could we know the lesser things which were working out God's way? . . . There is always something new to be discovered. And it is essential for the whole world that the chronicle should be full."

She went about all the courts of the palace alone, and everywhere saw the same work going on, and everywhere met with the same kind looks. Even when the greatest of all looked up from his work and saw her, he would give her a friendly greeting and a smile; and nobody was too busy to lend an ear to the little visitor, or to answer her questions. And this was how she began to talk to another. . . . She stood by him a little, and saw how he worked and would take something from one book and something from another, putting them ready for use. And it did not seem to be any trouble to do this work, but only pleasure, and the very pen in his hand was like a winged thing, as if it loved to write. When he saw her watching him, he showed her the beautiful book out of which he

was copying, which was all illuminated with lovely pictures.

"This is one of the volumes of the great History," he said. . . . And he turned the leaf and showed her other pictures, and the story that went with them, from which he was copying something. And he said:

"This is for another book, to show how the grace of the Father was beautiful in some homes and families; . . . and there are many who love that better than the story which is more great."[1]

And if it be probable that poets and painters and historians find room and occasion for their respective vocations in the future life, why not architects, builders, weavers, decorators, and every craft that is useful and beautiful?[2]

On that morning when our Saviour Christ came forth from Joseph's tomb, He opened the broad vistas of eternity, through which the eye of faith could look, and see not only God dwelling alone in unapproachable solitude, not alone the angelic hosts who stand around the throne day and night to do His bidding, but the ten thousand times ten thousand who are redeemed to God out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation. Nay, more; on that day, so long ago, He opened to you and me the glorious possibility of standing with them, not only with harps in our hands, but with the tools of service which we have learned to use in our earthly lives, with the culture which we have

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Julius L. Marcy.

given our minds and the training which we have given our hands, preparing us for far more efficient work for Him as eternity rolls by. Do not say that I am picturing a material Heaven. I do not know that the carpenter will carry his plane, and the blacksmith his hammer, and the grocer his scales, and the student his books to the heavenly workshop,—though I see not why they are any more material than harps:—but of this I am confident—the training I have given my body to enable it to do good work here will not be lost there. The culture I have given my mind here will enable me there to grasp at once truths which otherwise I must wait long to apprehend. The nourishment I have given my soul will make it strong for the spiritual work it has there to do.[1]

All the practical skill we acquire in managing affairs, all the versatility, the sagacity, the patience and assiduity, the promptitude and facility, as well as the highest virtues which we are learning every day, may well find scope in a world such as is rationally anticipated when we think of Heaven as the stage of life which is next to follow the discipline of life.[2]

And it deepens immeasurably the importance of our earthly training and pursuits to feel that nothing in this life that we do is temporal only, but all has its bearing on the eternity that is to follow.[3]

We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made;

[1] Rev. Charles A. Savage. [2] Jeremy Taylor.
[3] H. M. Luckock, D.D.

And fill our future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.
There shall the soul around it call
The shadows which it gathered here,
And, painted on the eternal wall,
The Past shall reappear.[1]

"Done nothing," echoed my father. "Perhaps we disagree. I think I have the key to some work of yours that might have spared you a little vexation. Will you come with me to see your pictures that we have so greatly loved to watch, as an index to your mind? . . . Your pictures were conceived in thought. You could not burn them. Reflected on a sensitive canvas here, they glow as if painted yesterday."

"I cannot understand," I said stupidly.

"You have indeed an eternity of surprises before you," returned my father, "but this is simple enough. Let us go."

Turning to the right, down a superb corridor, I found myself fronting my lost pictures. . . . The colors had indeed followed my conceptions. I, the created, could again feel the power to create. . . . Lost in a splendid train of dreams, I stood entranced.

A hand touched my shoulder. A man of stern yet beautiful visage stood beside me. "Sir," said he, "I am not long from the earth world. . . . May I not thank you for all you have done for me, for the comfort and inspiration I have drawn from your pictures?"

[1] Whittier.

Can any one appreciate how much his words meant to me? . . . Now I knew in very truth that my work was good, because it had served another.[1]

As we mourn the departure from us of noble spirits, of the powerful and the wise and the saintly, let us reflect for our consolation not only that they help us still, but that they are, as we trust, carrying on, with larger opportunities, the very work of their life here, and exercising, for the glory of their Lord and to the benefit of His Church, on a grander stage, those very gifts which distinguished them while with us in the flesh.[2]

> That force,
> Surely, has not been left vain!
> Somewhere, surely, afar,
> In the sounding labor-house vast
> Of being, is practised that strength,
> Zealous, beneficent, firm.[3]

When you think of the numberless human beings who pass into the unseen world, sorely needing help and comfort, why should it be thought incredible that souls are constantly drafted from this world into the next, to do some useful service there? . . . Think you that John the Baptist's useful career was suddenly and prematurely cut short that he might be idle in the spiritual realm? His work here was done, and, depend upon it, work was found for him elsewhere.[4]

[1] From *Behind the Veil.*
[2] Rev. G. Body.
[3] Matthew Arnold.
[4] Rev. Malcolm MacColl.

Shall we dare to say that no man's death is premature, that each is ripe with what ripeness is best for him in this garden before God calls him to the next? Ah, my dear friends, we must know more of that next Garden and its cultures before we can say it is *not* so. If, indeed, the children's graves are not the ends but the starting-points of lives, and if the strong man only proves his hands here for work (of who can say what magnitude and importance?) that he is to do for ever there, then, as surely as the body cannot pass from life to death without a cause working out under a law to its result, so certainly the soul cannot pass from life to life save by its cause and law as well, and in the fulness of its ripened time.[1]

Let such thoughts as these comfort us when we see the wise and good of the race removed in the midst of their usefulness — men and women who seem to be absolutely necessary to the cause they have espoused; or when the strong arm upon which we have leaned, or the fair youth upon whom our dearest hopes were set, is taken from us just when we think that we most need him. Let us comfort our hearts and tranquillize our minds with the thought: The Lord hath need of him. And who would wish to hold back any soul that He graciously promotes in His service?[2]

> Yes, in some far-shining sphere, . . .
> Still thou performest the word
> Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live,

[1] Phillips Brooks. [2] L. M. Wooster.

Prompt, unwearied as here.
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad;
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succorest. This was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.[1]

Why should not those who have been most energetic and successful on earth in turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just be employed in mission work in other planets, or lesser worlds, or even in those lower regions where Christ went in the spirit and preached to men in the spirit? Many souls there are that have had no real chance for spiritual culture in this world; yet we are told that there is a soft spot to be found in every heart if the right touch be laid upon it. Is it to be supposed that that touch will *not* be laid upon it in the future world?[2]

Are there no souls behind the veil
That need the help of guiding hand?
Weak hearts that cannot understand
Why earth's poor dreams of Heaven must fail?

Are there no prison-doors to ope,
No lambs to gather in the fold,

[1] Matthew Arnold. [2] L. Marcus Woolwich.

No treasure-house of new and old,
To meet each wish and crown each hope?

We know not; but if life be there
The outcome and the crown of this,
What else can make their perfect bliss
Than in the Master's work to share?[1]

Two men were coming up the street, men of majestic stature and air, with faces at once so noble and so sweet that I, like everybody else, stood aside and bowed as they passed. "Who are they?" I asked of my nearest neighbor in the throng.

"They are physicians, and one of them was St. Luke when on earth," was the answer. "They work in the hospitals."

"The hospitals!" I echoed in great surprise. "Are there sick people here, then?"

"Sick with sin," returned my informant, gravely. "They are covered with festers of vice, insane with false notions of our Father and of His government, or, while healthy in all other respects, they have one deplorable deformity. Their spiritual bodies are so weak, so undeveloped, that they cannot stand alone. It is the work of those physicians that you have just seen, and of others like them, to cure the diseases, heal the sores, correct the deformities, and administer such potent tonics that by and by they may be discharged cured, clothed, and in their right minds."

"And do they ever fail?"

"I don't know. I think not. There may be

[1] Rev. E. H. Plumptre.

cases of long duration and slow cure. But these are among the things that few of us here know anything about. No one goes to the hospitals but the physicians, the angels, and the nurses."

"The nurses!"

"Yes; men and women of marvellous tenderness and skill in caring for the sick. Sometimes they are friends of the patients, but generally they are strangers, trained for and enamored of their work."

"And do they spend their lives—I mean, their eternity—in it?"

"Not quite. It is work that takes a great deal out of the workers, as you may imagine; and when the head physician—that is, St. Luke—sees that they are getting weary, he sends them out for a long vacation—for ever, if they choose; there are always others ready to take their places. But most of them go back again. They love the work beyond anything. And when one of their patients is discharged cured, they are so happy, so thankful, that nothing—no labor, no delay, no weariness—counts even as dust in the balance against it. We are all happy here, as you see, but I think those physicians and nurses have moments of a happiness more exquisite than the rest of us ever know. Besides, as to eternity, we know that the time is coming when it shall be said in every part of the universe: 'There are no more sick.'"[1]

Perhaps you will suppose that there is no such service as hearing sermons, that there is no attendance upon the Word of God in Paradise. But are

[1] John Worden.

we sure that there are no such entertainments? Are there no lectures of Divine wisdom and grace given to the younger spirits there by the spirits of a more exalted station?[1]

The next day was a holy day. . . . We assembled to be instructed by . . . St. John the Apostle. . . .

He reasoned of mysteries over which we had pored helplessly all our lives below. He explained intricate points in the plan of human life. He touched upon the perplexities of religious faith. He cast a great light backward over the long, dim way by which we had crept to our present blessedness. He spoke to us of our deadliest doubts. He confirmed for us our patient belief. He made us ashamed of our distrust and our restlessness. He left us eager for faith. He gave vigor to our spiritual ideals. He spoke to us of the love of God, as the light speaks of the sun. He revealed to us how we had misunderstood Him. Our souls cried out within us as we remembered our errors. We gathered ourselves like soldiers as we knew our possibilities. We swayed in his hands as the boughs sway in the wind. Each man looked at his neighbor as one whose eyes ask, "Have I wronged thee? Let me atone." "Can I serve thee? Show me how." All our spiritual life rose like an athlete, to exercise itself; we sought hard tasks; we aspired for far prizes; we turned to our daily lives like new-created beings; so truly we had kept holy day.[2]

[1] Ian Maclaren. [2] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

Time fails me to speak of all the activities and ministrations that may be reasonably predicated of the dwellers in Paradise. They may be sent on errands of mercy or justice to other planets. They may be employed to influence the minds and strengthen the courage of those who hold high office and are tempted to do evil. They may be appointed to minister to souls on earth that are suffering from doubt, despondency, despair, pains of body and mind. Unless we greatly misinterpret Holy Scripture, they will be called upon to "rule over cities," to exercise control and administer government. There may also be occupations of which we can now have no conception, into which they will be admitted as apprentices, and in due course will become masters. They will live

> "In alternations of sublime repose,
> Musical motion, the perpetual play
> Of every faculty that Heaven bestows,
> Through the bright, busy, and eternal day."[1]

Whatever else they do, or do not do, this we are told they do,—they worship. They satisfy, it would seem, in perfection, that mysterious instinct of devotion—that inborn craving to look up and adore—which, let false philosophy say what it will, proves the most benighted idolater to be a man, and not a brute,—a spirit, and not a mere natural being.

They have worshipped, and so are blest. They have hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and now they are filled. They have longed for, toiled

[1] Marcus Werner.

for, it may be died for, the true, the beautiful, and the good; and now they can gaze upward at the perfect reality of that which they saw on earth only as in a glass darkly, dimly, and afar; and can contemplate the utterly true, the utterly beautiful, and the utterly good in the character of God and the face of Jesus Christ. . . . Adoration is their very bliss and life. It must be so. For what keener, what nobler enjoyment for rational and moral beings than satisfaction with and admiration of a Being nobler than themselves? Therefore they worship, and their worship finds a natural vent in words most fit, though few, but all expressing utter trust and utter satisfaction in the worthiness of God. Therefore they worship, and by worship enter into communion and harmony not only with each other, not only with angels and archangels, but with all the powers of nature, the four beings which are around the throne, and with every creature which is in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and in the sea.[1]

[1] Charles Kingsley.

The Society of the Garden

No trace of solitude appears in the next life, the life that lives for ever.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

The capacity for social acquaintance and enjoyment must increase proportionately with the general advancement of the soul.

REV. AUGUSTUS C. THOMPSON.

Sweet was the intercourse of saint with saint,
Nor less of saints with angels.

BISHOP E. H. BICKERSTETH.

XII

WE are by our very constitution social beings. . . . The social tendencies of our constitution are not destroyed by death. They survive the dissolution of the body, and so far from being extinguished will only be fully developed in Heaven.[1]

Call me not dead when I have gone
Into the company of the ever-living
High and most glorious poets! Let thanksgiving
Rather be made. Say, "He at last hath won
Rest and release, converse supreme and wise,
Music and song, and light of immortal faces:
To-day, perhaps, wandering in starry places,
He hath met Keats and known him by his eyes;
To-morrow (who can say?) Shakespeare may pass,
And our lost friend just catch one syllable
Of that three-centuries wit that kept so well,—
Or Milton, or Dante, looking on the grass,
Thinking of Beatrice, and listening still
To chanted hymns that sound from the heavenly hill."[2]

The most delightful society of angels, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and all the saints is there; among whom there are no reproaches, contentions, con-

[1] Rev. J. M. Killen. [2] Richard Watson Gilder.

troversies, nor party spirit, because there are none of the sources whence they spring, nor anything to encourage their growth; for there is particularly no ignorance, no blind self-love, no vainglory nor envy, which are quite excluded from those divine regions; but, on the contrary, perfect charity, whereby every one, together with his own felicity, enjoys that of his neighbors, and is happy in the one as well as in the other. Hence there is among them a kind of reflection and multiplication of happiness.[1]

The joyful experience of each soul will pass into the joy of all. Even here, Christians are sufficiently knit into one body to be affected by one another's sufferings and delights. But the sympathy which is here a matter of deliberate and difficult attainment and most imperfectly realized even among those who stand nearest to each other will then be instinctive and universal. . . . Love will go out from soul to soul in the same strong and satisfying manner (however less in degree) as in the Blessed Trinity itself. All those peculiarities which in this life hinder and repel confidence will be done away. Hearts will be open to each other. No false reserve will any longer conceal the motive which prompts every action.[2]

Those whose life has been spent in mutual bitterness or ceaseless controversy may find themselves at once in the wrong and in the right, and dwell together under the shadow of the wings of God.[3]

[1] Rev. Robert Leighton. [2] Rev. A. J. Mason.
[3] Rev. E. H. Plumptre.

Yet we shall one day gain—life past—
Clear prospect of our being's whole,
Shall see ourselves and learn at last
Our true affinities of soul. . . .
And we, whose ways were unlike here,
May then more neighboring courses ply,
May to each other be brought near,
And greet across infinity.[1]

Nor is there in the heavenly world any ungracious personality, or one so absorbed in himself as to forget others; and good breeding and a nice appreciation of what is fitting is now the heritage of those who were relatively rude in the Land of Shadow. So that the opportunities for friendly acquaintance and intimate companionship are found on every side according to individual nature, tastes, acquirements, and accustomed duties. Yet in no age will the unselfish loves of earth—friendships formed in earthly fires, and the experience of common joys and sorrows in the Land of Shadow—be forgotten in the spiritual sympathy and solace and light and love in our Father's house.[2]

Neither is life long enough for friendship. That is a serious and majestic affair, like a royal progress or a religion, and not a postilion's dinner, to be eaten on the run.[3]

On earth I had never had time to be really social, even with my nearest friends and neighbors; I was

[1] Matthew Arnold. [2] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires.* [3] Emerson.

obliged to snatch at a morsel of cordial intercourse now and then, and go on my way unsatisfied. I had travelled much, and in my travels I had sometimes encountered persons of a sweet and singular congeniality, whom it would have been a joy to know intimately, but Duty said inexorably, "Move on!" and often I never saw them again. I determined that, in the long leisure of eternity, I would try to find these kindred souls, and renew the friendship so well begun, so soon interrupted. But first I would establish more intimate relations with my own dear kinsfolk; intercourse with them had also been sadly restricted by my engrossing cares and business. I looked forward with delight to long and leisurely conversations with my youngest brother, whom I had recognized as a choice spirit on earth; yet between us had always hung that strange mist of reserve which so often clouds the intercourse of the nearest and dearest relatives, not destroying affection but preventing confidence. I also rejoiced in the thought of a renewal of the complete sympathy and understanding that had existed between my elder sister and myself; to whose wise and gentle influence I owed very much of what was best in my character and attainments. My parents both died while I was too young to realize the loss; it was delightful to make their acquaintance, and to deepen my few dim memories of them into living facts and loving sympathies.[1]

But not only shall we have companionship with these,—with fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters,

[1] Julian Woodworth.

husbands, wives, with friends whose companionship has been so precious to us here,—we shall also be admitted to loving intercourse with those whose faces we have never seen in the flesh, with those who have been separated from us on earth by distance, or by a long series of generations, but whose characters have influenced us, or whose writings have elevated us,—the noble, the intellectual, and the saintly ones of every age. With all these we shall be brought into communion.[1]

Moreover, it is probable that the pleasures of social intercourse will be greatly enhanced by the immense variety of races and characters brought together under conditions that will emphasize diversities without precluding sympathy. Not only the saints and heroes, the poets and musicians, the master-minds of every profession and craft known to earth, will there meet and exchange thoughts and experiences, but we may also have opportunities of listening to descriptions of the nature and life of other planets, and even of worlds that thousands of years agone ceased to be. And if, on this earth, there are no two faces and characters exactly similar, think of the enormous variety of aspects, temperaments, and acquirements gathered from every quarter on the universe, and the endless social enjoyment to be derived from a society so vast and various! Few things are more interesting to us now than the narratives of persons who were born or have travelled in remote lands; what will it be to listen to the experiences of natives of Mars or Uranus! to see the

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

Washington, the Shakespeare, or the Michael Angelo of those planets![1]

And the greatest wonder of all will be that all these different personalities are in perfect love and harmony!

No more hate, no more jealousy, either between individuals or nations. A general affection unites groups as well as persons. All desires, all pleasures, assume a similar character—inward happiness and adoration of God. Love, often so selfish, so tyrannical on earth, changes its nature and is turned to continual admiration of the Creator's works and to divine affections.[2]

Seclusion, exclusion, befit time. But eternity! The eternity of the beatified knows nought of seclusion when all are brethren beloved, nor of exclusion when all are saints.[3]

Not that love can be
Without the chosen specialties of love,
The nearest to the nearest most akin.
But none are strangers here, none sojourners;
And as the cloudless ages glide away,
New fountains of delight to us, to all,
Will open in the fellowship of hearts
Unfathomed by us yet.[4]

When, at last, we shall have cast aside the worn-out rags of our selfishness, and, turning our eyes and feet upward, are clothed upon and winged with love,

[1] Jarvis L. Macgregor.
[2] Louis Figuier.
[3] Christina G. Rossetti.
[4] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

on the heavenly heights, who shall guess to what new meanings sympathy and comradeship and helpfulness may grow? These are the things into which it hath not entered the heart of man to conceive.[1]

One of the most memorable things which I observed about heavenly relations, was that people did not, in the degree or way to which I was accustomed, tire of each other. Attractions, to begin with, were less lightly experienced; their hold was deeper, their consequences more lasting. I had not been under my new conditions long before I learned that here genuine feeling was never suffered to fall a sacrifice to intellectual curiosity or emotional caprice, that here one had at last the stimulus of social attrition without its perils, its healthy pleasures without its pains.[2]

And oft
A group of the beatified, enlinked
In all the bonds of holy lineage,
Would cluster underneath the trees of life,
One eye kindling another, one deep thought
Waking another, and this another,
Until all bosoms overflowed with love,
And all perforce would hasten to the Throne,
And at their Father's footstool pour their hearts
In one full tide of common rapture forth.[3]

Nowhere do we find on earth that picture of society reconstructed by the idea of Jesus,—society around the throne of God,—which shines out to us

[1] Lucy Larcom. [2] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.
[3] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

from the mysterious pages of the Apocalypse, the glory of which society is to be this—that while the souls stand in their vast choruses of hundreds of thousands, and all chant the same anthems and all work together in the same transcendent duties, yet each bears the Sacred Name written on the flesh of his own forehead, and carries in his hand a white stone on which is written a new name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. It is individually emphasized by company, and not lost in it, because the company is met in the idea of Jesus, which is the Fatherhood of God. . . . In such a thought as that there opens before me all the social life of Heaven. It is all liberty. No redeemed spirit shall ever have the power or the wish to encroach a hair's-breadth upon the development or the redeemed life of any other. Each shall grow free and straight towards its own perfectness. And yet between these free lives, which never invade one another, there will always be the complete sympathy of a common dependence upon the one Source and Saviour of them all. They will be all one, because they all belong to Christ; and yet the separateness of each shall be kept perfect because each is claimed with its own peculiar claim and marked with its own special mark. In all the solemnity of personalness and all the sweetness of brotherhood, the celestial life shall flow along its ever-deepening way.[1]

The elect spirits who have won the prizes in life's battles, who have come forth from the chaos of strife

[1] Phillips Brooks.

trained, inured, yet pure, shall play out their parts on a grander scale, in a wider theatre, under the eye of a more absolute and exigent King. All that society aims at on earth, and misses,—the grand order of human relations, the majestic procession of human activities, of which, maimed and crippled as they are on earth, the wisest and noblest have not ceased to dream,—shall there be realized, with Christ the King visibly in the centre of it, and the angels attendant.[1]

We lose much of the joy of our heavenly expectation if we do not keep in mind the Communion of Saints. . . . The joy that we shall have in Christ will be the joy of an intense sympathy with all those who delight in Him; the joy of each will be the joy of all.[2]

In the presence of Thy glory,
  Safe for ever at Thy feet,
I, at last, shall hold communion
  With the saints I long to greet. . . .

Bending, melting, in each other,
  Without let or thought of fear,
All the hindrances shall vanish
  Utterly that hold us here.

With full insight understanding
  Thy great work within each soul,
New varieties of glory
  Every history will unroll.

[1] J. Baldwin Brown. [2] Rev. R. M. Benson.

Soaring through the golden ether,
  Piercing it like shafts of flame,
Rise the notes of adoration
  Through the Source from whence they came,

As the prayer of prayers is answered—
  "I in them and Thou in Me,"—
Perfect all in One for ever—
  Trinity in Unity.[1]

[1] Caroline M. Noel.

Ranks and Degrees

THERE are degrees in Heaven as everything
By God's will. Unimagined space,
As full of suns as is earth's sun of atoms,
Faileth to match His boundless variousness,
And ever must do.

PHILIP JAMES BAILEY.

Uniformity of station and character is not more to be desired in Paradise than on earth. There, as well as here, variety enriches and energizes life. Uniformity is stagnation; variety is stimulation.

J. L. MORTIMER.

That there are various grades and different ranks amongst the inhabitants of Heaven is a matter of express revelation; for we read of "thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers" in the Celestial world.

REV. J. M. KILLEN.

XIII

ALL Scripture goes to show that there will be no general equalizing, no flat level of mankind in Heaven. Degrees and ranks as they are now, indeed, there will be none. Not the possession of wealth, not the accidents of birth, which are held here to put difference between man and man, will make any distinction there; but equality and distinction will proceed on other grounds,—the amount of service done for God, the degree of entrance into the obedience and knowledge of Him, these will put the difference between one and another there.[1]

> There is predominance in Heaven, and grades
> Of lower and superior sanctities:
> All are not equal there, for brotherhood
> And freedom both abhor equality,
> The very badge of serfdom;—only there
> It is the true nobility of worth
> The aristocracy of gentleness,
> The power of goodness and of doing good.[2]

It is not to be supposed that, because there is no sin in the spiritual world, there will not be various grades of being and different degrees of development. The angels even are not represented as

[1] Rev. R. G. Swayne. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

uniform in character or office. It may be taken for granted that the diversity of age, rank, talent, and character, which constitute so much of the interest and pleasantness of this life, will contribute as much to the life to come. The only difference will be (and what a difference is that!) that each person's position and vocation will be as perfectly fitted to him or her as a glove to the hand; it will afford him ample opportunity for the happy exercise of every taste and talent that he possesses, and consequently for every growth and development of which he is capable; and therefore he will be contented and happy in it. He will know that he is in his own proper place both by the gravitation of his nature and by the will of his Heavenly Father.[1]

> Chance no entrance here may find,
> No more than hunger, thirst, or sorrow can.
> A law immutable hath 'stablished all;
> Nor is there aught thou seest that doth not fit
> Exactly as the finger to the ring.
> It is not therefore without cause that these
> O'erspeedy comers to immortal life
> Are different in their shades of excellence.
> Our Sovran Lord, that settleth this estate
> In love and in delight so absolute
> That wish can dare no farther, every soul
> Created in His joyous sight to dwell
> With grace, at pleasure variously endows.
> . . . . Therefore as grace
> Inweaves the coronet, so every brow
> Weareth its proper hue of orient light.[2]

[1] Justin L. Mather. [2] Dante.

Even God can give us only according to our capacity of receiving. No vessel can be more than brimful; and though, when once in Heaven, we may all be growing alike in our power of receiving more grace, and learning more truth, and rendering more service, and drinking more joy, entering Heaven, we start, so to speak, with all possible varieties of moral stature and spiritual attainment, the stature and the attainments being fashioned upon earth.[1]

But in that blessed City there shall be this great blessing, that no inferior shall envy any superior, as now the archangels are not envied by the angels, because no one will wish to be what he has not received, though bound to be in strictest accord with him who has received; as in the body the finger does not seek to be the eye, though both members are harmoniously included in the complete structure of the body. And along with his gift, greater or less, each receives this further gift of contentment, to desire not more than he has.[2]

And if to look up and admire be delightful and profitable on earth, it is likely to be still more so in Paradise. And if to look down in loving helpfulness be good and pleasant on earth, there is no reason why that goodness and pleasure should end with this life. It may be taken for granted that both admiration and ministry will pass unchallenged through the gates of pearl.[3]

Character recognizes what is nobler than itself,

[1] Bishop Anthony W. Thorold. [2] Saint Augustine.
[3] John Worden.

and bows instinctively before the superior nature for a blessing; or, where a beseeching glance is met, its own hand is ready to bestow benediction.[1]

And this ready recognition of superiority of character or attainment in others is the easier because, in no one, however highly placed, will there be the slightest taint of pride or superciliousness, as in the lowlier one there will be nothing of cringing or abjectness. The intercourse of each with each will be characterized by its own fitting grace and worth. And, too, underlying all appearance of disparity, there will be a certain essential equality, inasmuch as all are in Christ, and Christ is in all; and the one thing common to all, and uniting all in sympathy, is the love of God and readiness to do His will.[2]

The little Pilgrim took a great pleasure in watching a painter who was standing upon a balcony, painting upon a great fresco; and when he saw this he asked her to come up and see his work. She asked him many questions about it, and why it was that he was working only on the draperies of the figures, and did not touch their faces, some of which were already finished and seemed to be looking at her, as living as she was, out of the wall, while some were merely outlined as yet. He told her he was not a great painter to do this, or to design the great work, but that the master would come presently, who had the chief responsibility. "For we have not all the same genius," he said, "and if I were to paint this head, it would not have the same gift of life as

[1] Lucy Larcom. [2] Julius Woodward.

that one has; but to stand by and see him put it in, you cannot think what a happiness that is, for one knows every touch and just what effect it will have, though one could not do it one's self; and it is a wonder and delight perpetual that it should be done."

The little Pilgrim looked up at him and said: "That is very beautiful to say. And do you never wish to be like him—to make the lovely, living faces as well as the other parts?"

"Is not this lovely too?" he said; and showed her how he had just put in a billowy robe, buoyed out with the wind, and sweeping down from the shoulders of a stately figure in such free and graceful folds that she would have liked to take it in her hand and feel the silken texture; and then he told her how absorbing it was to study the mysteries of color and the differences of light. "There is enough in that to make one happy," he said. "It is thought by some that we shall all come to the higher point with work and thought; but that is not my feeling; and whether it is so or not, what does it matter? for our Father makes no difference; and all of us are necessary to everything that is done; and it is almost more delight to see the master do it than to do it with your own hand. For one thing, your work may rejoice you in your heart, but always with a little trembling because it is never so perfect as you would have it; whereas in your master's work you have full content, because his idea goes beyond yours, and as he makes every touch you can feel 'That is right—that is complete—that is just as it

ought to be.' Do you understand what I mean?" he said, turning to her with a smile.

"I understand you perfectly," she cried, clasping her hands with the delight of accord.[1]

For it is by no means of so much consequence what a man does as how he does it. His calling does not so much ennoble him as he his calling. Accuracy, perseverance, conscientiousness, patience, industry, are all immortal and invaluable properties of human character, . . . and in the day when God makes up His jewels to set in His Son's diadem, not necessarily those who have filled the highest places, or won the most applause, shall shine forth with the most transcendent brightness; but those also shall be very near the throne who have postponed the praise of men to the praise of God, who have been content to do modest duties well, rather than important duties badly; whose courage has kept them poor, and whose plain-spoken honesty has deprived them of advancement; who have never suffered any earthly thing to blind their eyes to the seeking of God's glory, or to blunt their hearts to the sense of His love.[2]

I may say that I found far more reverence for differences of rank or influence than I was used to seeing, at least in my own corner of the earth. The main point was that the basis of the whole thing had undergone a tremendous change. Inheritance, wealth, intellect, genius, beauty, all the old pass-

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Bishop Anthony W. Thorold.

ports to power, were replaced by one so simple and yet so autocratic, that I hardly know how to give any idea at once of its dignity and its sweetness. I may call this "personal holiness." Position, in the new life, I found, depended on spiritual claims. Distinction was the result of character. The nature nearest to the Divine Nature ruled the social forces. Spiritual culture was the ultimate test of individual importance.[1]

It is inherent in this state
Of blessedness, to keep ourselves within
The Divine Will, by which our wills with His
Are one, so that as we, from step to step,
Are placed throughout this kingdom, pleases all,
Even as our King, who in us plants His will;
And in His will is our tranquillity.
It is the mighty ocean, whither tends
Whatever it creates and nature makes.
Then saw I clearly how each spot in Heaven
Is Paradise, though with like gracious dew
The supreme virtue shower not over all.[2]

Among other differences that will continue or pass over into the Garden, will probably be that of ages. If the inhabitants of this world were all young, or all old, or all middle-aged, life would lose much of its interest and pleasure; therefore it is reasonable to suppose that differences of age will exist in the world to come. They certainly must for a season, because death takes all ages thither; but when that "last

[1] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. [2] Dante.

enemy" is destroyed it is probable that the same result may be attained in other ways, perhaps by new creations or births, perhaps by the perpetuation of existing variations. While it may be true of Paradise that all its inhabitants are "dowered with eternal youth," yet even that celestial youthfulness may not be incompatible with individual variousness. They who have become immortal may keep, "amid all the transfigurations of the glorified state, much of the qualities that distinguished them here—the innocence of the young, the dignity and maturity of riper years, and the calm serenity and wisdom of the old." It may even be that those who have lived longest in the heavenly air may be most youthful in appearance; but it will not be the youth of adolescence, but of perfect strength and beauty, like that of the "young man" seen in the sepulchre after the Lord had risen, the dawn of whose being may have antedated that of the earth.[1]

The perfect life of the dead in Christ has but one phase—youth. It is growth without a limit and without decline. To say that they are "ever young" is the same thing as to say that their being never reaches its climax, that it is ever but entering on its glory. . . . What if the eternal youth of the heavens means, amongst other things, that *there* are pleasures which always satisfy and never cloy? What if, in perpetual advance, we find and keep for ever that ever new gladness which here we vainly seek in perpetual distraction. What if constant new influxes of divine blessedness, and constant new visions

[1] Marcus Werner.

of God, keep in constant exercise that sense of wonder which makes so great a part of the power of youth? What if, after all that we have learned and all that we have received, we still have to say, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be"? Then, I think, in a very profound and blessed sense, Heaven would be perpetual youth.[1]

"But," says one, "if it be true that differences of age and attainment, different degrees of holiness and helpfulness, are perpetuated hereafter, does it not follow that such differences will soon or late constitute a barrier to perfect sympathy and intercourse between friends who journeyed together in affectionate harmony here?" We answer: "Not necessarily; as is proved by the fact that just such differences do not always separate kindred and friends in this life. A blind man and a seeing man, a deaf man and a hearing man, may be said to live in different worlds, at least in one respect, but enough of common ground remains to allow of the friendliest intercourse and harmony. And the same thing is true of persons of great attainments in art or science. Musicians and artists, authors and statesmen, men in business and men of leisure, often become close friends, and their different characters and vocations cement rather than hinder their relations. As in music more than a single note is required to produce harmony, so in friendship a certain degree of unlikeness only adds charm and strength to the bond.[2]

[1] Alexander Maclaren, D.D. [2] L. M. Wooster.

Loving hearts are not sundered in Heaven any more than here because one may be purer and more richly endowed than the other, and is therefore capable of receiving impressions to which the other is insensible. Just as the trained eye of the man of science can see a perfect rainbow in the lily or the rose—a world of beauty beyond the seeing of unskilled eyes,—so different saints may see different worlds of beauty in the Beatific Vision, each receiving all that his spiritual condition can appreciate, some seeing more, some less, the saints differing from each other as one star differs from another star in glory. All will be as happy as their several natures will permit, . . . expanding more and receiving more according to the capacity of each, going on from strength to strength in an endless journey into fresh worlds of greater splendor and increased happiness.[1]

Yet this advance need never take them beyond the reach of all whom they have truly loved. If in this life there are men and women who, in the highest positions, do not fail to keep in affectionate touch with the old home and old friends, returning thither year after year to renew the dear old ties in the old familiar places, it will surely be even more the fact in the land where all is love and truth and harmony. And as in all friendships there is likely to be one who leads and one who follows, those who stand highest in the heavenly kingdom will doubtless find it one of their dearest pleasures to lead their friends into as much of their own pleasure and privi-

[1] Rev. Malcolm MacColl.

lege as it is possible to share. Ranks and degrees will there conduce to the happiness of all, because they are for the better service of Him whom all love and who loves all.[1]

Lord, grant us grace to love Thee so
That glad of heart and glad of face,
At last we may sit high or low,
Each in his place,

Where pleasures flow as rivers flow,
And loss has left no barren trace,
And all that are, are perfect so,
Each in his place.[2]

[1] Julius Woodward. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.

Angels in the Garden

The life of the angels is the love of uses.

SWEDENBORG.

The seraphs—they are men of kindly mien;
The gems and robes but signs
Of minds more radiant and of hearts washed clean,
The glory, such as shines
Wherever faith, or hope, or love is seen.

UNIDENTIFIED.

God is so infinitely good that there are some of the greatest and most excellent spirits of Heaven whose work, and whose felicity, and whose perfections, and whose nature it is to flame and burn in the brightest and most excellent love.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

Beholding the face of God, they adore Him: being rapt with love of His beauty, they cleave unto Him: desiring to resemble Him, they long to do good unto all His creatures, and especially unto the children of men,

HOOKER.

XIV

WE cannot separate ourselves from the great human conviction that beside the supreme personal life of God, which is the source of all existence, there are other spiritual beings, of many varying orders, who do His will, and are the emanations of His life in other worlds as man is here in this grosser world of flesh and blood. The Divine existence multiplies itself. The company of spiritual beings who surround Him with their loyalty and love, the angels in countless orders sweeping upward from the ministers of man's lowest wants up to those who stand nearest to the Throne—all these in some belief or other have been included in the faith of every race of men, of almost every man, who had come to the knowledge of a spiritual world and trusted in God. We must not rob ourselves of the strength and richness that the thought of their existence has to give.[1]

If it is logical to assert that God has not withdrawn into the eternal solitudes, but is as close today as in the olden time when His voice of warning or command rang through the history of the Jews, it is equally logical and not more daring to declare that His angels are our guardians as they were the guardians of our ancestors. No change has taken

[1] Phillips Brooks.

place either in our human needs or in His methods. What infinite wisdom and goodness decreed for our fathers holds good for us. If messengers from on high could visit Abraham, and make their presence known to Elisha, there is no reason to believe that they are unwilling to come to our assistance; and if they offered their ministrations to our Lord, why may they not be expected to do us a like service, since we have been made heirs of the Lord's privileges?[1]

The angels—
They are God's ministering spirits, and are sent
His messages of mercy to fulfil,
Good for salvation's heirs. . . .
. . . Was it meant
That we this knowledge should in secret seal,
Unthought of, unimproving? Rather say,
God deigns to man His angel hosts reveal,
That man might learn like angels to obey;
And those who long in Heaven their bliss to feel
Might strive on earth to serve Him even as they.[2]

Scripture gives us ample warrant for believing that there are such beings, and even outlines for us some of their distinctive characteristics and offices. David speaks of angels who "excel in strength." St. Paul mentions "elect angels." St. John, letting us look with him into the wonders of his heavenly Vision, shows us "a strong angel," and afterward "another mighty angel." One of them introduces himself

[1] Rev. George H. Hepworth. [2] Bishop Richard Mant.

thus: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." Moreover, St. Peter and St. Jude let us see that even these exalted beings were not always perfect by referring to "angels that sinned," and who "kept not their first estate."[1]

Our Lord speaks of guardian angels who "always behold the face of my Father, which is in Heaven." He speaks, too, of the angels or messengers who carried Lazarus to his abode of bliss; they are present to receive the departing spirit; they accompany and guide it; they are ministering spirits still:

> "Thou art not alone; on either side
> The portal, friends stand guard."

It is no dream of fancy, no poetic imagery, that shows them hovering near the deathbed of the just, but the very word of Him at whose birth and at whose departure into the skies the angels were present, and talked with men.[2]

At the head of the angelic hierarchy is Michael, the Guardian and Champion of God's chosen people Israel; then there is Gabriel, the great Herald of the Incarnation, with some special charge, we can well conceive, over the Body of which the Son of Man is the Head. Both of these are named on the authority of inspiration; two others, Raphael and Uriel, on the subordinate testimony of the Apocrypha,—the one to be an angel of mercy, as the

[1] Jane Logan. [2] Bishop George Burgess.

divinely commissioned healer; the other to reflect in his operations, as well as in his name, the light and fire of God. Besides these there are three others, as the Jews believed,—Ruchael, the angel of the wind; Abdiel, the special attendant upon God; and Sammael, the messenger of death; or, according to some early traditions of Christianity, Zophiel, who was one of those who guarded the entrance of Paradise; Chamuel, who wrestled with Jacob at the brook Jabbok; and Zadkiel, who pointed to the ram caught in the thicket. . . .

It was distinctly revealed to the Hebrew converts that in joining the Church of Christ they had "come to an innumerable company of angels." Elsewhere they are described as an army of spiritual hosts or legions; and the figures are very significant, for they bespeak at once discipline and cohesion and community of interest.[1]

"And I beheld; and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne; . . . and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands." Thought fails before the "number of them," no simile, no symbol, conveys it to me. I suppose if every single thing I have ever looked upon had been an angel, yet altogether they might not sum up "the number of the fourth part" of that celestial, holy nation. Around the Throne and the Living Creatures and the Elders they form a ring more glorious than of fiery opals, and they form a garland more lovely than of roses.

[1] Rev. H. M. Luckock.

How know I that they are lovely and glorious? I, a sinner, know it because certified that they have never sinned. Created loveliness and lustre can be defaced by sin only. Every faithfully good creature abides in its place as an image of God.[1]

The angels are they who are at one with God in purpose, who keep His commandments with such delight that our Lord Jesus could make no prayer for the earth more fitting than that God's will might be done on earth as it is in Heaven. It is a service so sweetly toned and so varied as to be like a great instrument, responding perfectly to the Master's touch, the praise of God by all the activities of which finite beings are capable.[2]

The angels have great intellectual attainments. They are wise in science, whether of the physical creation or of mind. They have made the things of God a study under the best conditions. They are summoned to conferences with God Himself. Their school has been the universe, their Teacher the great Creator. Not by one world have their studies been bounded; they have drawn their lessons from all worlds. The angels have also exalted moral perfection. They have not been lowered by apostasy. Their keen minds have not been tarnished by sin. They have not felt the hateful mastery of lust and envy and sordid passions. From strength to strength they have gone on in holy character. . . . And they are supremely happy. Their songs are full of joy.[3]

[1] Christina G. Rossetti. [2] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D.
[3] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires.*

A mighty song of blessing
  Archangels too uplift
For their own bright existence,
  A grand and glorious gift.

But such their full life-chalice,
  So sparkling and so pure,
And such their vivid sense of joy,
  Sweet, solid, and secure,—
We cannot write the harmonies
  To such a song of bliss;
We only catch the melody
  And sing, content with this.[1]

A company of angels had touched the highest crags before me. Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive that which God hath laid up for those who love Him. . . . Nor can I find words to describe the beauty of these beings, their garments, their mien, and all that their eyes were speaking. . . . They bore the marks of being allied to the Infinite Friendship, without those expressions of countenance that indicate the limitations of love in earthly experience. Since I had reached the heavenly world, I had not till now seen such majestic faces; these were indeed the sons and daughters of the Almighty, so abiding in His love, so filled with His desires and animated with His purposes, that while they plainly loved each other, yet for all spiritual kinship they

[1] Frances R. Havergal.

were allied to God as intimately as if wedded friends.[1]

The angels have a twofold office, first, as ministering before God, secondly, as servants of men. They are "ministering spirits," *i. e.*, they bear their part in the great ritual worship of the spiritual Temple, fulfilling a priestly office in presenting before God the prayers of the saints. The angels also are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." . . . Yet, further, if we believe that a guardian angel is attached to each individual, it follows almost of necessity that its controlling power is not bounded by the earthly life of the object of its care, but that it continues to be exerted, and exerted with greater success, when the spirit has passed into that sphere where there is less to thwart and counteract its influence.[2]

It was no unusual thing to see two spirits passing by or standing in earnest conversation, one of whom was an angel and the other a child of earth. And it was beautiful to see the care, the patience, the tender kindliness of the one, and the trust and humility and reverence of the other. Those whom the angels thus cared for seemed to stand at the two extremes of spiritual and intellectual attainment; either they were the very timid and humble souls whose earthly lives had been of the lowest and most circumscribed character, who needed continual encouragement to dispel their fears and give them confidence in their new circumstances; or they were strong and lofty

[1] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires.*

[2] H. Mortimer Luckock, D.D.

spirits, kings of men—not by right of inheritance or wealth, but of character. In the one case, the relation appeared to be that of child and teacher; in the other, of brother and elder brother.

It happened that two such interlocutors—an angel and an earth-graduate—stopped near me as I sat looking out over the lovely landscape, and I could not help hearing a few sentences of their conversation.[1]

"It is eternal life," said the angel, "to know God. And during ages infinite, or far past telling or comprehension, during all revolving circles of heavenly time, the angels of God have sought to know Him. Nothing satisfies us save God alone. In all the material glories of the universe around us, and in the unfolding of spiritual powers, we evermore long for God, to repose in His love. Our search for infinite knowledge is but restlessness, unless as children we find the Infinite Father and Friend. He is the solace of all our days. The glory of our heavenly life is not without increasing splendor, since it culminates in God. In seeking to know Him we find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. This is the grand and absorbing occupation, offering bliss unspeakable for ages endless.

"Yet, O child of earth, it is in thee that we find new depths of Love Divine. . . . While the tribes of men were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly."[2]

"The angels are very good to us," the painter said. "They never miss an occasion to bring us

[1] Martin Worth. [2] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires.*

news; for they go everywhere, you know. . . . They are so tender-hearted; and more than that, they are very curious about men and women. They have known it all from the beginning, and it is a wonder to them. There is a friend of mine, an angel, who is more wise in men's hearts than any one I know, and yet he will say to me sometimes, 'I do not understand you; you are wonderful.' They like to find out all we are thinking. It is an endless pleasure to them, just as it is to some of us to watch the other worlds."[1]

Redeemed men will rank the angels in the significant contrasts which their own experience will supply. The angels have had a uniform life of obedience and progress. . . . Heaven has been their home always. They are used to its light and glory. But men who come to that world come to it as immigrants from a far different world. . . . It is the City of Refuge for those whom Satan has scented and tracked. It is the City of Peace for those who have known long campaigns of war. It is the City of Holiness for those who have known the miseries and the despairs of sin. Perhaps it can be told what heaven is to the angels, but it can never be told what it is to the saints![2]

"And what is more wonderful," the simple people said, "the angels themselves come often and listen to us when we begin to talk of the old time, and how we suffered heat and cold, and were bowed down with labor and with bending over the soil, and how

[1] M. W. Oliphant.

[2] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D.

sometimes the harvest would fail us, and sometimes we had not bread, and sometimes would hush the children to sleep because there was nothing to give them, and how we grew old and weary, and still worked on and on. 'We are those who were old,'" a number of them called out to her, with a murmuring sound of laughter. And one woman said, "The angels say to us, 'Did you never think the Father had forsaken you, and the Lord had forgotten you?'" And all the rest answered as in a chorus, "There were times when we thought this, but all the time we knew it could not be." "And the angels wonder at us!" said another. . . . And then there was a sound of laughter and pleasure, both at the strange thought that the Lord could have forgotten them, and at the wonder of the angels over their simple tales.[1]

It has already been said that the angels give information to the dwellers in the Garden of those in whom they are interested on the earth. Spirita saw some instances of this. As she stood watching the crowd in the great square, it seemed to her that one face—that of an elderly man, with marks of earthly care and suffering not yet quite obliterated—was almost sad. Yet even as she noticed it, the eyes lifted, the lips smiled, and he sprang forward to meet —yes, it must be—an angel. She had not before seen any of these wonderful beings, but the mingled sweetness and majesty of his face, the strength and

[1] M. W. Oliphant.

grace of his form, the indefinable expression of one who has had no personal experience of sin or sorrow, made her recognize him as one at once.

"You have news for me—news of my son?" cried the man, eagerly.

The angel took the hands stretched out to him, and held them kindly as he answered, "Yes; good news. He has resisted the evil, and chosen the good. It has been a long, hard struggle, but he has conquered."

"The Lord be praised!" exclaimed the father, fervently. "And you stood by, and helped him?"

"I did what I could," said the angel. "The real fight must always be in the man's own soul. It were fruitless else. But I kept the evil spirits away; we can always do that till the man himself opens the door of his heart to them, and bids them enter."

The man lifted the angel's kind hand to his lips. Spirita turned away.

Again, later, she heard just a few words while passing an angel and a woman engaged in earnest converse.

"I had almost despaired of her!" cried the woman, clasping her hands.

"Despair," he replied, not rebukingly, but with a sublime patience,—"despair has no place in all God's universe. Everywhere there is hope for those who will but lift their eyes to it."

And Spirita, remembering one for whom her own heart was sometimes *almost* heavy, went on her way comforted.[1]

[1] Justin L. Mather.

The angels are the fine, keen, strong instruments of God in carrying out His purposes through the whole universe. They have been trained to make skilful use of what men call "second causes,"—the forces of nature, the currents of feeling and opinion that now and then sweep over the world, etc.,—and so to bring to pass what He wills. For everywhere it is the Father's wise method to employ His children, whether angelic or human, in active, progressive work. He also gives them the impulse and the power to seek and to gain knowledge; then He leaves them to make use of it according to their ability. Not for angels any more than for men is there a "royal road" to learning or skill; who would attain the end must loyally and perseveringly use the means. There are no idlers, no cribbers, no superficial or supercilious tyros in the University of God. They are all diligent students, searchers, and workers.

One thing is especially noticeable in the angels, because it is in such strong contrast with much that is seen on earth. No angel, however lofty his office or attainments, is ever proud. His nearness to the great Father of all, seeing His infinite power, wisdom, and glory, is doubtless the reason of this. Also, he has learned that it is not the thing done, but the manner of the doing, that wins His approbation. The angels undertake the largest and the smallest tasks with the same prompt and cheerful obedience. To support or overthrow a throne, to save a nation from dire calamity or to guide a child's tiny feet away from some small

danger,—it is all one to them so long as it is the Father's will. To do His will is the never-ending delight of angels and archangels, of cherubim and seraphim, and all the hosts of Heaven.[1]

When the little Pilgrim turned . . . she found one standing by, such as she had not yet seen. This was a youth, with a face just touched with manhood, as at the moment when the boy ends, when all is still fresh and pure in the heart; but he was taller and greater than a man.

"I am sent," he said, "little sister, to take you to the Father; because you have been very faithful, and gone beyond your strength."

And he took the little Pilgrim by the hand, and she knew he was an angel. And immediately the sweet air melted about them into light, and a hush came upon her of all thought and all sense, attending till she should receive the blessing, and her new name, and see what is beyond telling, and hear and understand.[2]

[1] Louis M. Woodford. [2] M. W. Oliphant.

Knowledge that Is Wisdom

NOTHING that is gained in this world is lost. Christian knowledge is the preparation for heavenly knowledge.

REV. BURDETT HART, D.D.

Thou holdest in Thy store
Full satisfaction of all doubt, reply
To question, and the golden clew to dreams
Which idly passed us by.

SUSAN COOLIDGE.

Truth in its nearness—
Ether in clearness—
Gives the eternal hosts
Everywhere day!

GOETHE.

"Knowledge is power," we have been taught to say, but as we go on we shall change the proverb to "Wisdom is power," for wisdom is knowledge illuminated by love—knowledge that has found her soul.

LUCY LARCOM.

XV

MAN on earth is but a dwarf to what he shall be when transplanted "to breathe the ampler day, for ever nobler ends." In all departments of knowledge, as the great Newton said, the wisest men on earth "are but as children playing on the beach, and picking up a few bright pebbles, while the wide ocean of truth stretches unexplored before them." [1]

It has always been a joy to saints that they should *know* hereafter. Here they theorize and guess and wonder; there they will know. We look at facts, not only spiritual but secular facts, differently. Men cannot agree on matters of everyday life. . . . The difficulty is in their own imperfection, in the refraction which this world produces, in the disordered faculties of their minds.[2]

Verily we have learnt that if we are to have any pure knowledge at all, we must be freed from the body; the soul by herself must behold things as they are. Then, it seems, after we are dead, we shall gain the wisdom which we desire, and for which we have a passion. . . . For if it be not possible to have pure knowledge while the body is with us, one of two things must be true: either we cannot gain knowledge at all, or we can gain it only after death.

[1] Rev. Charles A. Savage. [2] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D.

For then, and not till then, will the soul exist by herself, separate from the body.[1]

St. Paul says, "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." The dimness of our present vision is emphasized in the original language by the use of a double figure which is obscured, if not lost, in the translation. Under the one figure he shows that here we can see things as though they were reflected in those dim metallic mirrors which the ancients used, where the likeness was always blurred and distorted. Under the other figure he intimates that we cannot now discern things at once, because they are put before us like an unsolved enigma, needing time and labor to unravel and interpret. But hereafter these drawbacks and impediments will be removed; there will no longer be anything either to obscure or mystify, but the unveiled brightness of the eternal truth will meet us "face to face."[2]

Old things had passed away, and all was new;
And yet of all the new-begun nought so
Prodigious difference made in the affairs
And thoughts of every man as certainty.
For doubt, all doubt was gone of every kind;
Doubt that erewhile beneath the lowest base
Of mortal reasonings, deepest-laid, crept in,
And made the strongest, best-cemented towers
Of human workmanship so weakly shake,
And to their lofty tops so waver still,
That those who built them feared their sudden fall.

[1] Socrates: *Plato's Phædo.* [2] H. M. Luckock, D.D.

But doubt, all doubt, was past; and in its place,
To every thought that in the heart of man
Was present, now had come an absolute,
Unquestionable certainty, which gave
To each decision of the mind immense
Importance, raising to its proper height
The sequent tide of passion, whether joy
Or grief.[1]

There are many who are born with an eager thirst for knowledge. They can simply slake it in this life; they can see in the surrounding dark only a few points of light; often they have to accept a "working hypothesis" instead of proved truth; but in the future life their thirst will be satisfied. Not quenched—for it is not likely that they will ever attain to universal knowledge—but every step will be firm in itself, while it leads directly to further knowledge. They will have the satisfaction of knowing and the joy of seeking, which is the height of delight to the true student.[2]

Mental disorders and perturbations will be at an end. . . All the faculties will come into far more efficient and harmonious action than ever before. The imagination will be in due subjection, the judgment wisely regulated, the memory greatly quickened, and the association of ideas determined by principles of the highest, holiest philosophy. The emotive faculties of the soul will also come under the sway of a sanctified logic. To those who

[1] Rev Robert Pollok. [2] Jarvis L. Macgregor.

are here liable to be carried away by surges of mere emotion, it must seem a high happiness to have their feelings all sweetly controlled by a will that is firm, calm, and intuitively wise. . . . Great must be his exaltation when the saint finds himself in no danger of feeling too much as well as too little, when he finds perfect balance introduced among the powers and affections of the soul, all of them working harmoniously and vigorously, former jarring and obliquities completely at an end.[1]

One great hindrance to the pursuit of knowledge in this world is the necessity of making a living. The favorite study must often be given up or postponed in order to do something which commands better or quicker remuneration; or the mind goes to it with a burden of care and responsibility that is incompatible with the doing of the best work. But all that is taught us of the future life seems to show that the earning of one's daily bread is not among its necessities. There are "twelve manner of fruits" on the tree of life, and we are free to partake of any or all of them at will. To be sure this may be, and probably is, only a figure, but all scriptural figures are meant to shadow forth truths; and one truth herein indicated seems to be that "food convenient" for the dwellers in Paradise is always easily procurable. The consequent freedom from carking and cramping cares must be one strong factor in the pursuit and attainment of knowledge. The absence of hurry must be almost equally helpful. Under such favorable con-

[1] Rev. Augustus C. Thompson.

ditions the mind cannot do otherwise than make steady and sure advance in any department of knowledge that it may choose for its field of labor.[1]

Another advantage will be the presence of teachers and guides in every branch of study who are both competent and willing. On earth they were past-masters in their art or profession, and they have continued to work and to learn through the ages of their spiritual life, until they are far in advance of even the brightest and best-furnished of the minds that come to them from this life. And to guide and instruct these fresh, eager minds in the rich pastures of science and truth must be a real pleasure to them, a privilege upon which they will seize with avidity. For we may believe that in Heaven no one learns selfishly, "for knowing's sake," but rather for the power of applying their knowledge to some good purpose, or of imparting to others the wisdom that has been sought and gathered with diligence and delight. And if there be "things correspondent each to each in earth and heaven," there may be schoolrooms in the better land; and the imagination may not go astray if it ventures to picture Copernicus in the midst of a class in astronomy, or Newton giving instruction in physics, or Agassiz enthusiastically lecturing to an enthusiastically listening circle of students on the relations between the material and the spiritual. Other masters in heavenly lore may be the angels.[2]

The great intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,

[1] Louis M. Woodford. [2] Lloyd Mortimer.

In circle round the blessèd gate
Received and gave him welcome there,

And led him through the blissful climes,
And showed him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows not reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?[1]

Every seeker after knowledge will find opportunities for precisely the kind of study and acquirement that he is fitted for by preference and qualifications. There may be a heavenly geography, geology, geometry, chemistry, and botany, to which those of this world are but elementary chapters; the arts of sculpture, painting, music, and poetry may be carried to heights that we do not dream of; there may be volumes giving not only the history of man from his first appearance on this earth, but of every being or creature that exists or has ever existed in the whole vast universe of which our earth is but a speck, a grain of dust in the balance; those who like to travel may journey from planet to planet and bring back wondrously interesting accounts of their scenery, products, and people; and new arts and new sciences, with new senses wherewith to engage in them, may be added to the list. The mind reels in thinking, or

[1] Tennyson.

trying to think, of the boundless fields of knowledge that lie open to students in Paradise.[1]

Unlike the dwellers in the elder Paradise, they have a right to all fruits that grow on the tree of knowledge or the tree of life. Nothing is forbidden to them, for they want nothing that God does not desire them to possess. They have entered into life by the one only Way—through the heart and mind and soul of Christ. Overcoming their sins in His strength, and becoming one with Him in love and purity and righteousness, they "inherit all things," both in this world and the world to come.[2]

From that height the saint can look behind and before him. And to compare past and present things must needs raise in the Blessed Soul an unconceivable esteem and sense of its Condition. To stand on that Mount whence we can see the Wilderness and Canaan both at once, to stand in Heaven and look back on Earth and weigh them together in the balance of the comparing Sense and Judgment, how must it transport the Soul![3]

In the larger view thus given to it, the disparities, injustices, and contradictions of life will be explained, and its hard problems will be solved. It will be made plain why it was that for a time wickedness triumphed and righteousness was vanquished. The reason for the mysterious dealings of Providence with men and nations will be clearly set forth. The things which the individual soul deprecated in its own history—hardships, trials, hindrances, failures —will unfold their hidden meanings. What was

[1] John Worden. [2] Lucy Larcom. [3] Richard Baxter.

dark will become light; what was discordant will disclose a marvellous harmony. So far as it is possible to the finite mind, it will understand God's plan in the creation and government of the universe; it will be thrilled with its beauty and grandeur; in some degree it will comprehend the height and depth of Love on which that universe floats as a wonderful ship on a more wonderful sea.'

Ah, worlds, ye cannot shine too bright,
  Nor sing too joyously,
Nor up your infinite highways
  March too triumphantly!
And some day God will give me leave
  To go where the visions shine,
And the sight of the Lord and all He did
  Shall then, my soul, be thine!'

The new conditions of the life after death will be, for those who have in any measure sought and are still seeking for light, favorable also to the larger knowledge of divine truth. The soul may not as yet be ripe for the Beatific Vision, and may have to wait for the time when it shall know even as it is known. . . . The transition from our present partial knowledge to that complete knowledge may legitimately be thought of as gradual rather than instantaneous.'

For it is not likely that the soul will leap into knowledge and wisdom there any more than it does here. There will be work for it to do; but its prog-

[1] John Worden. [2] Rev. Denis Wortman. [3] Rev. E. H. Plumptre.

ress will be sure and steady, a continuous advance along a path that will have no stumbling-blocks for careless feet, no diverging tracks to lead them into error, no false lights to tempt them into bogs and morasses of doubt and speciousness,—an advance which is not from error to probability or from doubt to certainty, but from knowledge to knowledge and so on to wisdom.

> "And all
> Are blessed even as their sight descends
> Deeper into the truth, wherein rest is
> For every mind." [1]

Not that we shall know everything, for that were to cease to be finite. And if ever the blasphemous boast come true that tempted man once, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," there were nothing left for the soul that was filled with all knowledge but to lie down and pant its last. It needs, by our very nature and for our blessedness, that there should be much unknown. It needs that we should ever be pressing forward. Only, the mysteries that are left will have no terror in them. "There shall be no more sea," but we shall climb ever higher and higher up the mountain of God, and as we climb see farther and farther into the blessed valleys beyond, and shall know even as we are known.[2]

One thing more may be taken for granted—that the finite minds in the King's Garden will not know the future. That knowledge properly belongs only

[1] Juliet Lee Maclane.

[2] Alexander Maclaren, D.D.

to Omniscience. But they will have no reason either to dread it or to long for its advent. They know that it will bring them nothing that is hurtful or sorrowful, therefore they will not dread it. They will feel no desire to hasten its coming, even though it may promise to be better than the present, for "sufficient unto the day" will be the joy thereof.[1]

[1] Julia Wood.

Growth in the Garden

More than a figure is it when we speak of Heaven as a paradise, a garden, a place of growths, where our spirit shall develop among other spirits for ever.

Lucy Larcom.

This day before dawn I ascended a hill, and looked at the crowded heaven;
And I said to my spirit: When we become the enfolders of those orbs and the pleasure and knowledge of everything in them, shall we be filled and satisfied then?
And my spirit said: No; we but level that lift, to pass and continue beyond.

Walt Whitman.

For a rational but finite being, the only thing possible is an endless progress from a lower to higher degrees of moral perfection.

Kant.

The crystal river of eternal life
Flows ever deeper on.

Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

XVI

"FROM glory unto glory!" Shall the grand procession fail
When the darkling glass is shattered as we pass within the veil?
Shall the joyous song of "Onward!" at once for ever cease,
And the swelling music culminate in monotone of peace?

Shall the fuller life be sundered at the portal of its bliss
From the principle of growth entwined with every nerve of this?
Shall the holy law of progress be hopelessly repealed,
And the moment of releasing see our sum of glory sealed?[1]

Shall we stop growing in heaven, or is our entrance there not much rather the beginning of a new stage in that growth which has no end? There, too, will not our loftiest attainment be as a platform upon which we can stand to reach up to what is still higher? Will not the attitude of spirit which is inseparable from all advancement and all health here

[1] Frances R. Havergal.

be the attitude in the other world too? Shall we sit there, with nothing to wish for, drowsy amid languid contentments? or shall we there, as now, feel the truest sense of life in aspiration and motion towards unattained but possible good and goodness? Shall we not then possess all that hope by which we are saved, with only the loss of the painful sense of incompleteness? May not a fair vision of what we shall be gleam before us, which shall excite wishes without tumult, consciousness of non-possession without pain, aspiration without the pang of yearning, certainty without fear, and work without effort? Will not the glories that are to be revealed exercise their attraction over us then? Will not this be still the description of our being, "reaching forth unto those things which are before"?[1]

In the parable of the unjust steward, Jesus uses this expression in speaking of the future, "everlasting tents." It is at once a contradiction and an explanation, for it combines the ideas of rest and advance,—a life of achievement where the tent is pitched, a life of possibilities where it is for ever being lifted.[2]

It is not said that the character will develop in all its fulness in this life. That were a time too short for an evolution so magnificent. In this world only the cornless ear is seen; sometimes only the small yet still prophetic blade. The sneer at the godly man for his imperfection is ill-judged. A blade is a small thing. At first it grows very near the earth. It is often soiled and crushed and down-trodden.

[1] Alexander Maclaren, D.D. [2] Ian Maclaren.

But it is a living thing. That great dead stone beside it is more imposing; only it will never be anything else than a stone. But this small blade—it doth not yet appear what it shall be.[1]

Do with us what Thou wilt, all-glorious Heart!
Thou God of them that are not, but will grow!
We trust Thee for the thing we shall be yet;
We too are ill-content with what we are.[2]

We are not children of ten yet in our long life of immortality. Before us stretches away the long experience, so dim, so calm, so certain, so certainly full of richer conditions and a perpetual development of this mysterious humanity of ours.[3]

Eternal life in heaven is plainly but a continuation and development of eternal life on earth. It will be the same in the essence of its character, in the motive of its service, in the substance of its joys, in the nature of its glory. It will be different, for there will be no mortal body to hamper its action, no sinful nature to interrupt its progress; in perfect liberty and in entire security, with energies that will never be exhausted, with opportunities that will never be thrown away, it will expand in the glorified soul through the eternal ages, to the praise of God and the joy of men.[4]

The beauty and the glory of the immortal life is that it is an eternal entering-in. Ever shall we be penetrating into new mysteries, ever aroused by

[1] Henry Drummond.
[2] George Macdonald.
[3] Phillips Brooks.
[4] Bishop Anthony W. Thorold.

nobler enthusiasms to loftier undertakings, ever enfolded by purer affections, ever forming holier alliances, ever taken deeper and deeper into the heart of Christ, into the fathomless abysses of the love of God![1]

The eye by gazing into the day becomes more recipient of more light; the spirit cleaves closer to a Christ more fully apprehended and more deeply loved; the whole being, like a plant reaching up to the sunlight, grows by its yearning towards the light, and, by the light towards which it strains, lifts a stronger stem and a broader leaf, and opens into immortal flowers tinted by the sunlight with its own colors. This blessed and eternal growth towards Him whom we can never exhaust is the perpetual youth of God's redeemed.[2]

Man's aspiration, his ideal, his aim, is infinite perfection; an attraction is ever luring him on, and ever receding as he advances. In this, man differs from all kinds of life below him. They are satisfied when their bodily wants are supplied. Man is never satisfied. Every fresh acquisition kindles a desire for more. In that sense, man is and always will remain imperfect; and therein lies his happiness. To satisfy him would be to make him miserable. It is not true that "Man never is, but always to be blest." In Heaven he is always blest. Every step in his endless progress is a new accession of bliss; and not the least part of the blessing is the incentive to fresh effort.[3]

It must be that before each glorified spirit in the

[1] Lucy Larcom. [2] Alexander Maclaren, D.D.
[3] Rev. Malcolm MacColl.

other life there shall be set one goal of peculiar ambition,—his goal,—after which he is peculiarly to strive, the struggle after which is to make his eternal life to be for ever different from every other among all the hosts of Heaven. And yet it must be that, as each soul strives towards his own attainment, he shall be knit for ever into closer and closer union with all the other countless souls who are striving after theirs. And the inspiring power of it all, the source of all the energy and all the love, must then be clear beyond all doubt,—the ceaseless flood of light for ever pouring forth from the self-living God to fill and feed the open lives of His redeemed who live by Him. There is the symmetry of manhood perfect. There, in redeemed and glorified human nature, is the true heavenly Jerusalem.[1]

Christ's presence now in the unseen world must be fraught with inconceivable blessings, however it may operate. And whatever the manner of its operation, the blessed dead are rejoicing in its warmth and brightness. It may be to them still as when the beams of the sun bring light to the natural world before the orb itself appears above the horizon. But they feel the glow and are made glad by it; and in its radiance they spring upward towards its full manifestation. How can they *not* grow in holiness when they live in the presence of Christ instead of in an evil world, and each longing that was once, perhaps, for the vain counterfeits of human good is now sent straight towards the reality?

[1] Phillips Brooks.

Oh, if it has been our happiness to discern in those we have loved on earth the presence of the heavenly graces, and now that they are gone it is our chief solace to recall them, apart from the intermingling of human imperfections, let us be sure that the reality is outstripping our fondest imaginations, and the growth of Paradise is rearing flowers of a beauty which our dull hearts cannot yet conceive![1]

All those beauties of character that you admire on earth are there wonderfully developed. All those capacities of greatness which you recognize are there unfolded. All those little weaknesses that grieved you (and who is free from them?) are there cast away. Mind, heart, will, and spirit are there attaining their perfect development; for there, through the vision of Jesus, they are being purified unceasingly with a painless purification, and are being transfigured with His glory.[2]

"From glory unto glory," till the spirit fails, and then
Illimitable vistas still opening to our ken;
Mysterious immensities of order and of light
Stretch far beyond our farthest thought, as thought beyond our sight.

"From glory unto glory" of loveliness and light,
Of music and of rapture, of power and of sight,
"From glory unto glory" of knowledge and of love
Shall be the joy of progress awaiting us above.

[1] Rev. R. G. Swayne. [2] Rev. George Body.

"From glory unto glory" that ever lies before,
Still wondering, adoring, rejoicing more and more,
Still following where He leadeth, from shining field to field,
Himself the goal of glory, Revealer and Revealed!

"From glory unto glory" with no limit and no veil,
With wings that cannot weary and hearts that cannot fail,—
Within, without, no hindrance, no barrier as we soar,
And never interruption to the glorious "more and more."

For infinite outpourings of Jehovah's love and grace,
And infinite unveilings of the brightness of His face,
And infinite unfoldings of the splendor of His will,
Meet the mightiest expansions of the finite spirit still.[1]

No ground lays firm hold of our minds for a continuation of existence at all, except such ground as makes that continuation an ascent. The prolongation of it, and the rise in the scale of it, go together; because the true belief is, in its very nature, an aspiration, and not a mere level expectation of the mind; and therefore while a low idea of eternity [*i. e.*, the pagan idea] obtained no credit, the Gospel doctrine inspired a strong conviction, because it dared to introduce the element of glory into the destiny of man.[2]

[1] Frances R. Havergal. [2] Rev. J. B. Mozley, D.D.

The Future is to be a grand progress through the linked sequences of an ascending scale,—a golden ladder which we shall climb, round after round, till we stand amid the awful and transfiguring splendors of the eternal throne,—a constant advance towards the central Light,—a constant increase in life, power, wisdom, charity,—a beatific vision which grows and spreads as we gaze upon it, and pours an enlarging volume of energy and peace into our souls.[1]

Then let every dissatisfaction with the present be made, not a discouragement, but an inspiration, by the continual consciousness of the great law of eternal growth; let the everlasting Saviour be always speaking out of every language of the outer and inner life to the immortal soul, "Thou shalt see greater things than these."[2]

Joy, joy to see on every shore
Whereon my step makes pressure fond
Thy sunrise reddening still before,—
More light, more love, more life beyond![3]

[1] Samuel Cox. [2] Phillips Brooks.
[3] Lucy Larcom.

The Children of the Garden

It was a little Child who swung
Wide back that City's portal,
Where hearts remain for ever young:
And, all things good and pure among,
Shall childhood be immortal.

LUCY LARCOM.

In that beautiful place He has gone to prepare
For all who are washed and forgiven,
And many dear children shall be with Him there
For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

JEMIMA LUKE.

The children bright,
With their harps of gold and their raiment white,
As they follow the Shepherd, with loving eyes,
Through the beautiful valleys of Paradise!

G. S. HODGES.

XVII

As the objects of earthly affection are taken from us we must allow reverent imagination to have its play; the child is not where the white stone proclaims its resting-place; it is not there, but risen where the angels are; follow it with devout fancy.[1]

And when the mighty hosts
  Of the redeemed shall meet,—
All times, all races, circling round,
  Adoring at His feet,
Will not a special grace
  Of heavenly beauty rest
On those bright souls who, ere they sinned,
  Were taken to be blest,—
Filled from the first with light,
  Filled with the Spirit's power,—
Of our redeemed humanity
  The undefiled flower?[2]

That there are children in the King's Garden, at home among its paths and flowers,—themselves its fairest flowers,—who that loves them can doubt? Who that has ever seen in fancy the smile on our dear Lord's face when He, who had been a child

[1] Rev. Charles H. Strong. [2] Caroline M. Noel.

Himself, took little children in His arms, looked into their clear eyes and blessed them, can think for a moment that, when He went to prepare a place for His own, there was no suitable place prepared for the children? I am confident that, in every part of the heavenly Kingdom, and in every one of the many mansions, there will be children, making the place doubly a Garden, a Paradise, a Home, a Heaven, by the charm of their grace, innocence, and gayety. When they slip from our clasping arms, that so fain would hold them, it is not into coldness and darkness, into strangeness and loneliness, that they go, but into a place "prepared," warm with love and sunny with happiness. Kind arms—it may be of friends and playmates, it may be of guardian or "elect" angels—are ready to receive them, to care for them, to wipe away every tear from their eyes. The pearly gates are wide open for their entrance, and everywhere in the Garden a warm "Welcome home!" awaits "these little ones."[1]

There 's a home for little children
  Above the bright blue sky,
Where Jesus reigns in glory,
  A home of peace and joy;
No home on earth is like it,
  Nor can with it compare;
For every one is happy,
  Nor could be happier there.[2]

It is no offense to good taste, or the sense of propriety, or the fitness of things, that the children of

[1] Jean Lomond. [2] A. Midlane.

Heaven should be what we know children are; that their employments should be those which accord with the mental and moral qualities of childhood; and that, therefore, in that world, pure and holy and glorious as it is, there should be the enjoyments and pleasures which belong to full, young, merry life, and that those blessed cities should be full of "boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." Our children who go there go not to gloom or stateliness; they are not grown-up children; and they find there what they want—the things and pleasures which fully satisfy them. God is their Father; He who has filled His creations as full of play as of work, who has poured around the world the dancing sunlight and covered two thirds of it with the leaping water, and crowded its atmosphere with sportive and singing birds and insects, and made the morning glad with music and the evening sweet with vespers, rejoices in the gladness and the play of children, and gives them room in Heaven for their fine and free indulgence.[1]

> Heaven itself would seem
> Too solemn and severe without its choirs
> Of infants revelling in innocence,
> Who never knew a touch of sinful grief,
> But live in joy, and joy because they live.[2]

As Spirita went along the river's bank, rejoicing in the sweet air, the new strength and life, the freedom from anxieties and burdens of every sort, she

[1] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

stopped short in surprise. She had come upon a group of children at play,—actually, children playing in a ring, skipping round and round and singing a little rhyme in voices as sweet and cheerful as a bird's morning twitter. The sight was perhaps the most unexpected one that she had seen. Children! —why, yes, she had known that there must be children in Paradise; but she had thought of them as quiet and subdued, awed and silenced by the strange, new surroundings,—"just little prigs," she murmured to herself, laughing both at the thought and the common earth-word that came to express the thought, and then laughing again to think how natural it all was, how truly she was still herself, as the children were still children.

They were so absorbed in their pretty play that they did not see her at first, but as soon as they did they surrounded her, seizing her hands and holding up their bright faces to be kissed,—"Because," the oldest girl said (whose earthly life had doubtless been made thoughtful with too-early cares),—"because you have lately come, and we want to make you welcome." Even the children recognized the mingling of surprise and questioning and half-uncertain joy on the faces of the newcomers. Then a blue-eyed darling, who had been looking at her steadily, put her arms round her and cried: "Oh, auntie, it is you! I am so glad! Now I shall have some one who belongs to me."

"Have you been lonely, then?" asked the aunt, as she warmly returned the embrace.

"Oh, no!" was the quick answer, "I have been

very happy; no one can help being happy here. But we all like to have somebody that belongs to us, you know."

Spirita glanced around. "And is there no one to look after you?" she asked.

The children broke out into merry laughter. "Why need we be looked after?" they said. "There is nothing, there is never anything to harm us."

"And the river so near!" said Spirita, doubtfully.

Their childish laughter rang out still more gleefully. "No one can drown in *this* river!" they cried. "Why, we can float like ducks on it!" And two or three of them ran down the bank into the water, and began to float and splash about, laughing merrily at her surprise.

"They are not in the least danger, I assure you," said the older girl, seeing that she was not yet quite easy about them. "And there is always some one —one of our mothers or a dear angel—not far away. It is not because we are ever in danger, oh, no! but they want us to know that some one who loves us is always near."

As she finished her face lighted up, and she smiled in recognition of some one that she seemed to see over Spirita's shoulder.

Spirita turned, and met the calm, deep eyes of an angel.[1]

The notion has gravely been put forth that children do not grow up in Paradise. It has been imagined that mourning mothers would be comforted

[1] Justin L. Mather.

by the belief that their darlings would be restored to them, in age and appearance, precisely as they were taken away. Yet such dwarfing of body and mind would be well-nigh intolerable to a mother in this life, why should it be deemed more desirable in the life to come? Far more beautiful as well as more reasonable is the faith of the mother who, as year by year her child's birthday comes round, says with shining eyes, "My boy is five (or six, or whatever it may be) years old to-day," mentally watching his growth and development with the same loving satisfaction as when he was by her side. Longfellow beautifully expresses the same thought:

"She is not dead, the child of our affection,
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ Himself doth rule.
Not as a child shall we again behold her,
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child,
But a fair maiden in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion,
Shall we behold her face."

This is surely the true parental love, to which nothing is more delightful than to see in its offspring that symmetrical growth which is "the law of all intelligence."[1]

As she was thinking . . . some one came up to her, . . . a being younger than the lady who

[1] Lynn M. Woods.

had spoken to her before, with flowing hair all crisped with touches of sunshine, and a dress white and soft like the feathers of a white dove. There was something in her face different from the other, by which the little Pilgrim knew somehow, without knowing how, that she had come here as a child, and had grown up in this celestial place. She was tall and fair, and came along with so musical a motion —as if her feet scarcely touched the ground—as if she might have had wings. . . . There was something in her face that was like a child; her mouth so soft, as if it never had spoken anything but heavenly words, her eyes brown and golden as if they were filled with light. She took the little Pilgrim's hands in hers, and held them and smoothed them between her own. These hands had been very thin and worn before, but now, when the Pilgrim looked at them, she saw that they became softer and whiter every moment with the touch of this immortal youth. . . .

"Are you a child?" said the little Pilgrim, "or are you an angel? Sometimes you are like a child; but then your face shines, and you are like—you must have some name for it here; there is nothing among the words I know." And then she paused a little, still looking at her, and cried: "Oh, if she[1] could but see you, little Margaret! That would do her most good of all."

Then the maiden Margaret shook her lovely head. "What does her most good is the will of the Father," she said.

[1] The mother, whom she had known.

At this the little Pilgrim felt a thrill of expectation and awe. "Oh, child, you have seen Him?" she cried.

And the other smiled. "Have you forgotten who they are that always behold His face? We have never any fear or trembling. We are not angels, and there is no other name; we are the children. We have had no other home."[1]

But, will there always be children in Heaven?

Assuredly, as long as the earth stands to serve as a feeder of child-life into Paradise; and that is likely to be for more thousands of years than we care to think of.

And after that?

Who can tell? Yet, if we trust the analogy of nature, the creative power of the Creator will for ever be exercised in making new beginnings of life—perhaps in other worlds still unborn, perhaps in Paradise or in Heaven itself. Even there constant successions of youthful and highly endowed beings may carry on the vast programme of creation from age to age. Given omnipotence, infinity, and eternity, and who shall set any limit to the power and duration of creative energy?

Childhood—not any one child, as a child,—but Childhood may be immortal in the Heavenly Country.[2]

O little ones of heavenly birth,
Whom I may meet in glory,

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] John Worden.

What years of time it shall be worth
To hear your wondrous story!
To see what childly life may be
Without a cloud or sorrow,—
No tears to-day for hopes that flee,
No lisp of "Joy—to-morrow"![1]

[1] Julia Wood.

Do They Remember?

Heaven is our home, for the full growth and development and enlargement of every faculty of the mind, every affection of the heart.

Bishop Mangasar Mangasarian.

Memory, which is the foundation of all the intellectual faculties, accompanies us into the eternal world. Indeed, its perpetuity is essential to our identity.

Rev. Archibald McCullagh, D.D.

Alas for him who never sees
The stars shine through his cypress trees! . . .
Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own.

Whittier.

And now at evening-time, when all the stars
Keep watch along the battlements of Heaven,
She bendeth from the palace-walls, to watch
For my home-coming step.

B. M.

XVIII

A SOUL goes forth from this world and enters into Heaven. Surely a part of that intensified and deepened sight of God which is to be its privilege and glory there will lie in the abundance of experience which it has accumulated here, and which will belong to it for ever. Every treasured experience will be to it like an eye with which to gaze on God. We shall know Him better for ever and for ever because of that success or this disappointment, because this friend played us false, or because the market turned just as our fortune was on the point of being made.[1]

Can anything short of positive proof that it [the soul] sleeps after death ever convince us that it will for an instant forget those who, up to the very moment of its departure, it thought of, and cared for, and loved above all else in the world? . . . However we may understand the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, we believe it equally with the rest to be "written for our learning." Now, we read that Abraham reminded the rich man of the past,—"*Remember* that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things"; and we know that he exercised the faculty of remembrance, for he showed himself

[1] Phillips Brooks.

mindful of the brethren whom he had left behind; he recalled their old mode of life and dwelt on the particular temptations to which they had been exposed, and, acting on the fears which the recollection engendered, he interceded for the deliverance of those who had survived him there.[1]

Truth is the same for all worlds. Reason and conscience affirm truth for ever. . . . Personal identity and the mental faculties will endure for ever. No creature could be judged, rewarded, or punished without intelligence and memory concerning the past life for which he was judged.[2]

Just as drowning men have sometimes solemnly asserted that, at the moment when death seemed imminent, every deed and every incident of the past has risen up in memory; so, it seems reasonable to think, it may be in the realm of the departed.[3]

I cannot think that a thing which, on the whole, is so certain to increase the happiness of the redeemed in Paradise as the faculty of memory will be denied them. As earthly travellers, having successfully reached their journey's end and accomplished the object for which it was undertaken, enjoy few things better than to recall now and then the dangers and hardships of their journeyings; so it seems likely that souls who have reached their desired haven will love to recall on occasion the toils and trials, the hindrances and discouragements, no less than the sunshine and the sweetness, through which, by God's grace, they made their way thither.[4]

[1] Herbert M. Luckock, D.D.
[2] S. A. Boardman.
[3] Rev. R. M. Benson.
[4] Leon M. Woodbridge.

If grief were there,
In memory of so little done for Him
Who hath done all for them, it was that grief
Which, while it chastens, only deepens joy,
Seeing the mantle of His love was thrown
Over the past; and henceforth it was ours
To see, adore, and serve Him without end.[1]

I looked through a microscope yesterday at a black point, no larger than the point of a needle, and I beheld color, form, and texture so beautiful, so various, so full of design, so complete in all its parts, that I felt like kneeling down and adoring the wonderful Creator of it all; and I thought how our lives, often so blank and objectless and disappointing, would appear to our clear and purified vision; so that we may well expect to fall down and adore when we look at the black points of our existence here as revealed there.[2]

Imagine the memories of Heaven: Every grace in all the past course of life distinctly seen; every blessing distinct before us; every peculiar providence with all its issues distinct and clear; thousands of answered prayers; thousands of prayers answered in a higher and better way; thousands of dangers averted; thousands of foolish wishes refused; all the long fashioning and training of our souls made known to us; the chastisements so wisely, so lovingly laid upon us; the gentle weaning from earth; the setting free from weaknesses, failings, sins; the

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [2] M. E. B.

beginnings and increases of graces; all our communions, with the ever fuller imparting of the Divine life; all the going from strength to strength until we appeared unto the God of gods in Sion. . . . Imagine all this coming back upon us![1]

Especially the remembrance of earthly sorrows, and of the "consolations of God" vouchsafed to us through Christ in the darkest of such days, when all the consolations of earth seemed trivial or meaningless, will be dwelt upon with the deepest gratitude, bringing Him close to their souls in a nearness and dearness that nothing else could produce.[2]

Yet in the country of eternal Spring
Many shall bend to kiss the Master's feet,
Saying, "He never smiled on me so sweet before
Save on the Sea of Sorrow, when the night
Was saddest on our heart, . . . when His steps
Were on the mighty waters, when we went
With trembling hearts through mists of pain and loss;
. . . And only Heaven is better than to walk
With Christ at midnight over moonless seas.[3]

The redemption song which the saved in glory sing surely involves the continuance of memory; it implies that they remember their experience here, and the sins from which they have been washed. And if they remember their experiences here, will they not also remember those with whom their lives were most intimately connected?[4]

Deprive the departed of memory and love, and of

[1] R. W. Randall.
[2] Julian L. Mackensie.
[3] B. M.
[4] Archibald McCullagh, D.D.

how much must we rob them? Shall we, indeed, think that we, who are in the body and compassed round with so many infirmities, can call to mind the places where God displayed His wonders of old, and that the saints who witnessed them with us remember them not?[1]

On the contrary, just as friends here, meeting after a long separation, delight to recall their memories of the "old times," we have every reason to suppose that it will be the same there, where such reminiscences will have the added interest of being revived in the light of so much fuller knowledge of God's ways and ends. And it is probable that the pains and sorrow which such friends shared will be among the most precious of these recollections, just as it is the storm through which we have lately passed that emphasizes the peace and safety of the home fireside.[2]

All tears done away with the bitter unquiet sea,
  Death done away from the living at last,—
Men shall say of sorrow (Love grant it to thee and
    me!)
  At last, "It is past!"

Shall I say of pain, "It is past," nor say it with thee,
  Thou heart of my heart, thou soul of my soul, my
    friend?
Shalt thou say of pain, "It is past," nor say it with
    me,
  Beloved, to the end?[3]

[1] Rev. George Percy Badger. [2] Loudon Marks.
[3] Christina G. Rossetti.

Memory lives on. I were not really myself were I there forgetful of the past. Memory is the one link between myself in the present and myself in the past. By it alone am I cognizant of my personal identity. And since I live on in the fulness of my personality in the land beyond the grave, the memories of time follow me there. The father is still the father, the brother is still the brother; the child is still the child. "I have five brethren." And there in the clearer light and purer love of that fair land, our faithful ones love us with an intenser love, and aid us with a mightier ministry.[1]

May they not even now be preparing for us the mansion which we have our Saviour's promise shall be waiting for us by and by? Surely those whose souls are one in life and love can know no real separation. They are only in different rooms of the Father's house, under the same roof. And as those in the upper rooms, near to the heart of God, look down upon us as we are toiling up the steep ascent, knowing our temptations, our struggles, our besetments, I believe it is not too much to hope that they still bear us on their hearts, and join their prayers with those of the great Elder Brother when He intercedes for us. Thank God for those ministering spirits, sent forth to minister, those praying spirits still permitted to pray![2]

I, in the quiet City,
Where the sun shines evermore;
Thou, out in the night, with thy fading light
And thy face away from the door. . . .

[1] Rev. G. Body. [2] Rev. C. A. Savage.

We used to talk of the glory,
When I, too, stood outside;
Now I see the King in His beauty,
In the far-off land abide.

I have spoken to Him at night, dear,
When I sat low at His feet,
And the light of His overcoming smile
Shone on till it seemed too sweet;—

Too sweet for one so worthless,
Yet I felt it set me free;
And free to think of thee, dear,
For He hath done all for me.

When the earth-wind sounded dreary
Far away outside the gate,
I have said, "It bloweth chill on her,
Will she not be home till late?"

The sun was on the City,—
The sun on the golden street,
And the light of His smile shone on awhile,
And His answer sounded sweet.

He spake in the speech of Heaven,
Which I may not tell to thee,
Save this: "I have rest and peace for all
Who seek for rest in Me." [1]

Are souls in Paradise conscious of what is passing on earth?

[1] B. M.

The appearance of Moses and Elias is a proof of some knowledge of terrestrial events among the saints above. At that one point of contact, at least, on that one great occasion, the worlds of the departed and the living were in contact. There is no cause for affirming that single instance to be the one sole exception on that side of the veil as well as on this. Their state is higher than ours, and must embrace wider and deeper knowledge. They do not come to us, and therefore can tell us nothing of what happens there; but we do go to them, and therefore they may well receive information of all that happens here. They are exhibited to us in Holy Writ as a "cloud of witnesses," by whom we are compassed about, a mighty mass of spectators, like those who, as if in a thick cloud skirting the horizon, encompassed and overhung the lists where racers toiled on toward the prize.[1]

I still am near,
Watching the smiles I prized on earth,—
Your converse mild, your blameless mirth;
Now too I hear
Of whispered sound the tale complete,
Low prayers and musings sweet.

A sea before
The throne is spread; its pure still glass
Pictures all earth-scenes as they pass:
We, on its shore,
Share in the bosom of our rest
God's knowledge, and are blest[2]

[1] Bishop George Burgess. [2] John, Cardinal Newman.

When you and I have reached the heavenly land, and stand on the borders of eternity, we shall not forget the life that has been lived. As our souls are satisfied, as we find comfort in the Eternal Protection, as we follow the Lamb from one fountain to another of exceeding joy, there shall come from time to time, climbing up and falling on the shore of the eternal life, some great wave of memory; and we shall look back to this little island in the eternal sea and behold the ones we love, who, like shipwrecked sailors, look across the great waste and wait for the coming of the ship that takes them home. And no doubt a cry will go up from us as we remember what that life was, and what to them life is.[1]

At that dim mysterious hour of peace,
That dawn of death in which tears must cease,
Ere we pass from the faintly moaning Sea
To the Haven that shineth glad and free,
Still Love will pray from that shadowy Sea,
"Save, Master, the souls that sail with me!"

. . . . . .

He giveth us peace at the last they say,
And more than all for which Love can pray;
Will He send a sweet Angel to say to me,
"Go in peace to the Land of the joyful and free,
For God hath given this day to thee
The souls thou hast prayed for steadfastly?

"Go in peace this day to the Haven wide;
Thou shalt see His face and be satisfied;

[1] Rev. Leighton Parks.

Thou shalt know His heart and rest in Him
With a peace that passeth thy knowledge dim,—
Not for thyself alone, but for all
Thy heart hath yearned for, great and small.

"And some shall enter the Haven wide
Full-sail, on the breast of a glorious tide;
And some shall come
To our golden Home
Sore battered and spent from an angry sea;
But thine heart shall count them, one by one,
And leap for joy as they greet the Sun,
Till God hath gathered them *all* to thee."[1]

The saints in Paradise are ever interceding mightily with God for their struggling brethren on earth. If they are capable of speaking to God at all, or of holding in any way intercourse with Him, if the memory of earth abides with them and the love of the brethren beats in their hearts, it is impossible, when memory recalls life's struggles, and love makes them full of sympathy for their brethren, but that they should give expression to that real sympathy to Him with whom they have such intimate intercourse.[2]

If they are in any sense "with Christ," they must be one with Him who is our Advocate with the Father, and "ever liveth to make intercession for us." Of this, indeed, we have something like an assurance in the cry of "How long, O Lord?" which went up from the souls beneath the altar in the apocalyptic vision.[3]

[1] B. M. [2] Rev. G. Body. [3] E. H. Plumptre, D.D.

This truth of the intercession of the saints does not involve the practice of direct intercession to them. Throughout I am using the term *saint* to designate the whole company of those who are with Jesus in Paradise. . . . The saints of whom I speak as interceding are not a select few. Yet how blessed is the thought of their intercession! How wondrously are we strengthened as we think of the great multitude pleading in Paradise![1]

If we compare the whole Church, as we have seen it somewhere compared, to one long army on its march towards Heaven, we shall be able to realize, though still very inadequately, how a veritable community can exist between the different parts, though they may be prevented from holding actual intercourse with each other. They have the consciousness that they all serve under one Captain, . . . all wearing the same uniform—the white robes of Christ's righteousness; all carrying the same standard, which is His Cross; all pursuing the same aim, the complete conquest over sin; and all inspired by the same hope of reward, even the crown of life. . . . And so, though some are constantly passing out of sight, and no voice comes back to tell us either where they are or what they are doing, the bond is never broken, the unity is intact.[2]

One family, we dwell in Him
  One Church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
  The narrow stream of death.

[1] Rev. G. Body. [2] Herbert M. Luckock, D.D.

One army of the living God,
To His command we bow;
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.[1]

[1] Charles Wesley.

Love in the Garden

What is excellent
As God lives is permanent:
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain,
Heart's love will meet thee again.

EMERSON.

Love reaches in our nature a depth and intensity far beyond the exigencies of our present life, and after providing for them all, is capable of passing into a transcendent, almost an infinite function of character.

DR. JAMES MARTINEAU.

To die is to be set in tune to God's eternal keynote —love. It is to come into harmony with one's self, and therefore with God; it is to come into harmony with God, and therefore with one's self.

LYMAN ABBOTT.

Dwelling in love, we shall, in the fullest sense of the words, dwell in God, and God in us.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

XIX

If, in a long life here, I have gained anything which is worth keeping, it is the knowledge and friendship and love of pure, generous, noble souls. Am I to lose that great inheritance? Am I to go into the other world poor, lonely, homesick, alone? I do not so understand the lessons of experience, or the facts of observation.[1]

From the first Power was, I knew:
  Life has made clear to me
That, strive but for closer view,
  Love were as plain to see.

When see? When there dawns a day,
  If not on the homely earth,
Then yonder, worlds away,
  Where the strange and new have birth.[2]

At present, it is almost impossible to conceive of ourselves as loving God and each other perfectly,—to have every motive of service, every spring of feeling, every throb of zeal rooted and grounded in love which self shall not spoil, and pride shall not tarnish. In Heaven, dwelling in an atmosphere of love, to

[1] James Freeman Clarke. [2] Robert Browning.

which each contributes and of which each receives, we shall behold Him who is the Sun from whom our light comes, the King from whom our royalty comes, the Priest who gives us our salvation; and the more we gaze, the more we shall love; and our growth in love will be as infinite as God.'

> The highest good
> Unlimited, ineffable, doth so spread
> To love, as beam to body darts,
> Giving as much of ardor as it finds.
> The sempiternal effluence streams abroad,
> Spreading wherever charity extends,
> So that, the more aspirants to that bliss
> Are multiplied, more good is there to love,
> And more is loved, as mirrors, that reflect
> Each unto other, propagated light.[2]

Heaven will not be a lonely place, that we should not there have any beside God to love. Love of our brethren increases, it does not shut out, the love of God. The more we love rightly, God or man, the more power we have to love both. There all will love all. There we shall love all in God, and God in all. We shall in the love of others love God the more, because it is God whom we shall love in them. They will not be separated from God, that we could love them apart from God. God will dwell in all there: all will be transparent with His glory and His love. His beauty (as it does here in a manner) shall make all beautiful; His love shall make all

[1] Bishop Anthony W. Thorold. [2] Dante.

lovely; His joy will beam in every countenance; His wisdom will fill all their thoughts. All shall be full of Him; all shall joy in Him; the joy in Him shall vibrate from soul to soul. All shall love Him the more because He is so good to those whom He gave to love them and to be loved by them.[1]

We shall learn to see in Him the centre of all possibilities of love and joy. The greater of these lesser delights is but the greater measure of His friendship. They will not mean less of pleasure, but more of Him. . . . Human dearness will wax, not wane, in Heaven.[2]

> Who loves, becomes
> Therein to Thee allied;
> All sweet accord of hearts and homes
> In Thee are multiplied.[3]

The relationships of home, the domestic relationship, so sacred, so divine, where human love begins, where first we learn to love; that garden soil of home which no rude hand must touch, no trespasser destroy, no violator invade; where love in all its sweetness, in all its beauty grows; which seems to be, and is, on earth like the paradise of God, but which is broken by death at times and blasted and destroyed! No, says Jesus Christ; it is not destroyed. That home, or that home relationship does still exist, and shall for ever exist. "Thy *brother* shall rise again!" And the home which ministered here to love, making

[1] Rev. E. H. Pusey. [2] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.
[3] Whittier.

us what we are, shall minister there to love, keeping us what we are.[1]

We must not doubt, or fear, or dread, that love for life is only given,
And that the calm and sainted dead will meet estranged and cold in Heaven,—
Oh, love were poor and vain indeed, based on so harsh and stern a creed.

But love is no such soulless clod; living, perfected, it shall rise
Transfigured in the light of God, and giving glory to the skies;
And that which made this life so sweet shall render Heaven's joy complete.[2]

It must at once strike us in reading the Gospels that when our Lord was on earth He did not manifest Himself to all those who were about Him in the same way nor with the same measure of favor. . . . Some were allowed to approach Him more closely, and some remained afar off; some were distinguished with peculiar favor, and admitted, if I may use the expression, to an intimacy not vouchsafed to the rest. . . . If, then, we can discover in our blessed Saviour the tokens of this discriminating affection, this choice of one before another to be more nearly and intimately His, the fact is in itself a proof that particular attachments are no transitory

[1] David H. Greer, D.D. [2] Adelaide A. Procter.

and fleeting element in our nature, suited for this state only and not to survive beyond it, but that, by being His, they belong to what is essential and imperishable in us, and will outlive the accidents and the end of this condition of our being.[1]

The groups that are bound by one affection and are separated from others, not by any repugnance or alienation, but simply by the attraction of their own affection, will be reproduced in Heaven. The family life is divine. God setteth the solitary in families. This life will last. The parent will be parent still. The mother who gave so much of her own life for the life of her child will own the relationship which enfolds mysteriousness and creation in it. The child will be no less her own on other shores, in better scenes, in eternal union.[2]

Beyond all analysis, too, lies the relation which every true son holds to a true father. It is a final fact. You cannot dissolve it by an abstract theory. It issues from the mysterious sympathy of the two lives, one of which gave being to the other. It has ripened and mellowed through all the rich intercourse of dependent childhood and imitative youth and sympathetic manhood. It is an eternal fact. Death cannot destroy it. The grown-up man feels his father's life beating from beyond the grave, and is sure that in his own eternity the child-relation to that life will in some mysterious and perfect way be resumed and glorified, that he will be something to that dear life and it to him for ever.[3]

[1] William Maturin. [2] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D.
[3] Phillips Brooks.

And the little Pilgrim cried out again in wonder and joy, and presently found herself seated between them—her father and her mother—the two who had loved her most in the old days. They looked more beautiful than the angels and all the great persons whom she had seen, for still they were hers and she was theirs more than all the angels and all the blessed could be. And thus she learned that though the new may take the place of the old, and many things may blossom out of it like flowers, yet that the old is never done away.[1]

There, in that abode of love, shall no special, holy love be lost. God has not formed us,—yea, bidden us, in this our nursery for the heavenly life, to love one another in all our several relations, that all this in the future life should cease. He has not bound us in all those varied sweet bands of love—fathers, mothers, children, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, friends, or those wider circles through which love radiates here—that the love which is from Himself, and which He has made a part of the undying soul, shall die. Rather it shall be a part of our joy to love all whom we loved here,—only how much more! because every infirmity which, in ourselves or others, checked the flow of love shall then have been absorbed in the love of God, and God shall fill all with Himself.[2]

Now I can love thee truly,
For nothing comes between
The senses and the spirit,
The seen and the unseen.[3]

[1] M. W. Oliphant. [2] Rev. E. B. Pusey. [3] J. R. Lowell.

It is true that the glorified will find their chief bliss in the perfect love of God, and the full consciousness of being beloved by Him; yet there is reason to believe that in loving and being loved by their glorified companions with a full and heavenly flame will consist no small measure of their felicity, and that this knowledge and love of each other, instead of abating, will increase the ardors of their love to the Godhead.[1]

Nor, what I chiefly noted, seemed my heart
Surcharged or freighted overmuch with love.
Affections with affections jarred not. All
Was music. As through some cathedral aisles
An organ of a thousand pipes pours forth
Its rich and multitudinous harmonies,
While the rapt organist touches at will
Its various stops—hautboy and trump and flute—
The clarion with the dulciana smooths—
And chastens with the plaintive tremulant
The diapason's thunder-roll:—
So love without confusion blended there with love,
Symphoniously distinct.[2]

There are problems which sometimes bewilder the hopes of renewed relationships in another world, like that with which the Sadducees attempted to bewilder our Lord, but these problems spring from thinking of eternity under the limitations of time. Where all are pure and loving (this much at least we may

[1] Rev. Robert Meek. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

assert) there can be no conflicting claims of love and friendship.[1]

Nevertheless, it seems probable that in some subtle and spiritual way, the ideal relation, the one which Christ Himself uses to symbolize His own relation to the Church of the Redeemed in Heaven, will pass over to the future life. Though there may be no marrying in that "better country," according to our human customs and rites, there may be a perpetuation of every perfect marriage, every marriage that has really made two hearts to "beat as one."[2]

God never made
Spirit for spirit, answering shade for shade,
And placed them side by side,—
So wrought in one, though separate, mystified,—
And meant to break
The quivering threads between.[3]

The love which rests on unity of purpose, on divine sympathy, or admiration for qualities of character,—the love which has its origin in what the loved one *is*, not in what he has,—*that* is as much a part of the soul as ambition is, or courage, and can no more die than the soul itself can die. Those who love each other in an earthly way may soon become strangers over yonder, but they who love in this higher way will come closer together when they reach the shore beyond the shadow.[4]

[1] Rev. Charles H. Strong.
[2] Leonard Mason.
[3] George Kringle.
[4] Rev. George H. Hepworth.

"Do you like," said the little Pilgrim, "to think of the old time?"

The woman turned and looked down upon her, for she was tall and stately, and immediately took the hand of the Pilgrim in hers, and held it without answering till the poet had ended and come down from the place where he was standing. He came straight through the crowd to where this lady stood, and said to her, "You did well to tell me," looking at her with love in his eyes,—not the tender sweetness of all those kind looks around, but the love that is for one. The little Pilgrim looked at them with her heart beating, and was very glad for them, and happy in herself; for she had not seen this love before since she came to the city, and it had troubled her to think that perhaps it did not exist any more. . . . The people in the city, except those who were strangers, were chiefly alone, and not like those in the old world, where the husband and wife go together. It consoled her to see again two who were one. The lady pressed her hand in answer to her thought, and bade her pause a moment and look back into the city. And then the Pilgrim was more and more consoled, for she saw many who had before been alone now walking together hand in hand.

"It is not as it was," Ama said. "For all of us have work to do which is needed for the worlds, and it is no longer needful that one should sit at home while the other goes forth; for our work is not for our life as of old, or for ourselves, but for the Father.[1]

[1] M. W. Oliphant.

He who dowered the earth with such strong personal attachments, the sweetest and best things in it, will not deprive Heaven of them. He who united two fond hearts in the closest and most endearing ties of earth will not beyond the grave, as the poet says, sever that united life into two, and bid each half live again and count itself the whole. Are they now as husband and wife heirs together of eternal life? The marriage were but a poor image of the bond which unites Christ to His Church if it were loosed beyond the grave. It is true that there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage in Heaven, for under new conditions there must be new relations; but it is only that which is temporary in marriage that is dissolved by death, while that love in it which is immortal is purified and perfected. If in this life only we love (to extend the words of the Apostle) we are indeed most miserable.'

How should this earth's life prove my only sphere?
Can I so narrow Sense but that in life
Soul still exceeds it? In their elements
My love outsoars my reason; but since love
Perforce receives its object from this earth
While reason wanders chainless, the few truths
Caught from its wanderings have sufficed to quell
Love chained below; then what were love set free,
Which, with the object it demands, would pass
Reason, companioning the cherubim?[2]

It is probable that the family relation, and all

[1] Rev. Hugh Macmillan. [2] Robert Browning.

other relations, will endure in Paradise just as long as they are pleasant and helpful to those whom they unite. And that is sufficient for us to know. Earthly ties sometimes outlast both their pleasantness and their usefulness; they become steel fetters of duty rather than golden links of affection. We may be certain that no such relation will be continued in Paradise. Every bond that does not add to the spiritual joy and well-being of those whom it binds will be loosed, and without pain to either. But the mere earthly imperfections, the infirmities of temper and discordances of temperament, that made even the closest and sweetest of earthly ties to have their periods of coolness and drops of bitterness, will have passed away for ever, leaving behind only what is true and fine and firm. The dear old friends will be dearer still, the sweet old sympathy and communion will be sweeter still. It is with true insight that the poet in the midst of the pains of bereavement says:

> "Yet less of sorrow lives in me
> For days of happy commune dead,
> Less yearning for the friendship fled,
> Than some strong bond that is to be."

It is sound good sense as well as tender love and faithfulness that bears patiently with the shortcomings of earthly affection,

> "Foreseeing that fair love which doth not feed
> On fleeting sense, that life that knows no age,
> That blessed last of deaths when Death is dead."

We may be sure that in some way, either by the

transfiguration of the old or the adoption of the new, the joy of pure and perfect friendships—heart to heart beating with a scope and fulness of understanding and sympathy quite unknown here—will there be among the satisfactions that await us when we awake "in His likeness."

"Far out of sight, while yet the flesh enfolds us,
Lies the fair country where our hearts abide,
And of its bliss is nought more wondrous told us
Than these few words: 'I shall be satisfied!'"

We shall be satisfied because the best aspects, and only the best, the finer essence, of all our earthly loves will be preserved to us; while beneath, around, and above them all, like an atmosphere of perfect light and purity and peacefulness, is the love of the Triune God, animating all, sustaining all, illuminating all, infinite and inexhaustible.[1]

As one
Who, climbing some far height at break of day
Among the Alps or lonely Apennines,
Sees ever at his feet new landscapes spread,
New vales, new glittering lakes, new summits pierce
The roseate sky with pinnacles of snow,
The air still purer crystal, and the arc
Of fresh horizons widening every step,
Yet at the highest touches not the fringe
Of heaven's blue curtain, and when seeing most
Sees but a narrow fragment of God's world;
So ever learning more we never stood

[1] John Worden.

Nearer the limits of His love, whose name
Is always, through all ages, Wonderful,
And as it has been, shall be,—things revealed
Only discovering more beyond our ken.[1]

On the loftiest height we shall behold summits sublimely beckoning us higher still, and our feet will ascend them, shod with angelic strength. Entering into the most dazzling glory that allures us onward, we shall see through it "a finer light in light," and our sight will be deepened to bear the intensity of the unutterable vision. And through the tenderest warmth of celestial love that enfolds us will ever throb a pulse of dearer and more spiritual tenderness that will win our hearts to meet and blend with it in a purer beating and a holier aspiring, for ever and for ever.[2]

One day may I be
Of that perfect communion of lovers contented and free,
In the land that is very far-off, and far-off from the sea.

One King and one song,
One thunder of voices harmonious and strong,
One King and one love and one shout of one worshipping throng.[3]

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [2] Lucy Larcom.
[3] Christina G. Rossetti.

The New Earth

Earth holds Heaven in the bud.

Christina G. Rossetti.

"Every street in the City of Gold," says my old teacher, "begins on earth."

From "A Story of the Heavenly Camp-Fires."

Every condition promulges not only itself; it promulges what grows after and out of itself.

Walt Whitman.

I long to see the hallowed earth
In new creation rise;
To find the germs of Eden hid
Where its fallen beauty lies.

Anna Letitia Waring.

XX

Now fain my joyous heart would sing
That lovely summer-time,
When God reneweth everything
In His celestial prime;
When He shall make new heavens and earth,
And all the creatures there
Shall spring from out that second birth
All glorious, pure and fair.

The perfect beauty of that sphere
No mortal tongue may speak;
We have no likeness for it here,
Our words are far too weak:
And we must wait till we behold
The hour of judgment true,
That to the soul shall all unfold
What God is, and can do.[1]

The term, "Father's house," necessarily includes the whole universe. This is God's building. And when He located His human children, He chose to put them, not in heaven, but on earth. . . . It is one of the many abiding-places, or "mansions," throughout the universe. Renewed in the last day, and purified from all corruption and corruptibility,

[1] J. Walthers, 1557.

it will afford a beautiful and blessed home for the redeemed of Christ.[1]

My faith is that these very hills and valleys shall yet be made glad with the songs of a finished redemption, and this earth become the bright, blessed, and everlasting home of men made glorious and immortal in body and soul.[2]

The loveliness of nature which, even in its temporary obscuration and almost ruin, we have loved, and for which, as the wreck of Paradise, we have blessed our and its Creator,—though we have discerned, and that but in transient glimpses, the fringe of His garment therein, the outer skirts of His magnificent beauty and His almighty power,—shall be restored and revealed, and that beyond that primal beauty, for the sight whereof, even in its first beginnings,

> "The morning stars sang together,
> And all the sons of God shouted for joy."[3]

The earth, emerging from her flood of fire
Baptismal, by a new and heavenly birth
Arose regenerate. The dews of God,
As once in Eden, cooled the ardent soil;
And rivers from innumerable springs
Flowed, intersecting every gorgeous clime
With living waters. Like a smile of light
The Sun of Righteousness in rising shed
Healing from His benignant wings; and earth,

[1] Rev. Ulysses S. Bartz. [2] J. A. Seiss.
[3] P. G. Medd.

Who came forth naked from her bath of flame,
Felt His rich blessing at her heart, and smiled
Responsive, and in blushing haste put on
Her beautiful robes of immortality.[1]

The change from old to new will probably take place at the coming of the "day of God," which will itself be ushered in by the coming of Christ.

I know the King shall come to that new earth,
And His feet shall stand again as once they stood;
In His man's eyes will shine Time's end and worth—
The chiefest beauty and the chiefest good;
And all shall have the all, and in it bide,
And every soul of man be satisfied.[2]

By this latter coming Christ will bring the Kingdom fully upon earth. . . . In short, Heaven will simply extend its borders so as to take in a redeemed earth and its redeemed people. The Apostle Paul may have had this in mind when he said: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." [3]

I do not think it will be altogether a *new* heavens and a *new* earth that will succeed the old; the newness will probably consist largely in freshness, brightness, and purity. There will be enough of the old to make the whole familiar and dear. Many will doubtless revisit the renewed earth to see where the stream of their direct ancestry began, and how carefully God had guided its course and flow, others to

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [2] Jean Ingelow.
[3] Rev. Ulysses S. Bartz.

study old subjects under new lights, or to see spots hallowed by association, but it is not likely that the earlier inhabitants would care to live there. What, for instance, would David or Solomon, Cæsar or Socrates, find that would be familiar? Little but the bare outlines of mountain and river and plain. But earth's later progeny, or those to whom for some special reason she was superlatively dear, might find in her an attractive home.[1]

> . . . Nor less delightful seemed
> To us, returning from the heaven of heavens,
> Our birthplace, earth. And easily we found
> Each haunt, to memory dear, of pilgrim days,
> Each hill and valley.[2]

It was a family group—a large family of two generations—returning to the dear old homestead where they first knew what life and love and home were. Nearly everything was unchanged, except that everything was purified and brightened; but Memory, with her tender, hallowing touch, had already done that in their minds, and they saw it all just as she had represented it to them in her unconsciously glorified pictures of the Past. By twos and threes, with tender eyes and hushed voices, they went through the familiar haunts, pausing here and there to say to one another: "Do you remember?—it was just here that you first told me you loved me."—"Here is the place where we used to play so constantly,—you and I and the rest."—"In this room

[1] Lucy M. Woburn. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

our first child was born."—"This is where Carrie fell, and was maimed for life,—I mean, of course, for her earth-life."—"It was just over there that mother's favorite roses grew—why! there they are still, just as lovely and fragrant as ever."—"This is where we all stood to wave a last good-bye to Robert when he started on that western journey, from which he never came back."

Suddenly the mother, standing at the window of her own old room, cried out: "Surely I miss something,—yes, the cemetery over yonder, where my two dear children's graves were. I used to stand here at night, when there was moonlight, and see the white tombstones through the trees, and think how——"

She stopped, confounded. They were all laughing at her,—a low, sweet, but very merry laughter. "Mother," they said, gathering round her, "see! we are all here. Do you really want our graves back?"

Then she too laughed. "It is all so natural," she said; "and the old life came back so vividly, I forgot that there is no more death—blessed be God!"[1]

Heaven and earth are to be renewed. Not so the sea: "There was no more sea." And wherefore not the sea?

Regarding the first creation as symbolical, one answer (however inadequate, please God, not contradictory of truth) suggests itself. The harvest of earth was ripened, was reaped, was garnered; the

[1] L. M. Wooster.

sea nourished and brought up no harvest. It bore no fruits which remain, it wrought no works which follow it. It was, moreover, originally constituted as a passage, not as an abode; across it man toiled in rowing to the haven where he would be, but itself never was and never could become that haven. Thus it presents to us a picture of all that must be left behind. . . . Yet how well shall we be consoled for our lost sea, with its familiar fascination, its delights, its lifelong endearedness! Lo, Heaven enshrines its own proper sea of glass as it were mingled with fire, and the uplifted voice of the redeemed is as the sound of many waters. There at last is fulness of joy, whereas the sea never yet was full,—there plenteousness of pleasures as a river. There music unheard hitherto, unimaginable, in lieu of the long-drawn wail of our bitter sea.[1]

The sea is a symbol of mystery, of rebellious power, of perpetual unrest. And it is the promise of the cessation of these things which is set forth in that saying, "There was no more sea." There shall be no more mystery and terror. There shall be no more "the floods lifting up their voice," and the waves dashing with impotent foam against the throne of God. There shall be no more the tossing and tumult of changing circumstances, and no more the unrest and disquiet of a sinful heart. . . . In all the regions of that heavenly state there shall be no jarring will, no reluctant submission. Its "solemn troops and sweet societies" shall move in harmonious consent of according hearts, and circle

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

His throne in continuousness of willing fealty. There shall be one will in Heaven. "There shall be no more sea," for "His servants serve Him," and the noise of the waves has died away for ever.[1]

The sea was not;
Its salt and barren waters were consumed
In that last fire; and all its fruitless wastes—
Once fruitless—now with profuse verdure clad,
In undulating hills and valleys, bared
Untrodden landscapes to the light. Nor deem
Because the ocean was no more, earth lacked
Her noblest type of the profound and free,
Nor Heaven its mirror. For the streams of life,
Flowing incessant, stored their crystal wealth
In countless tarns and lakes and inland seas,
Wherewith the sportive breezes wantoning
Drave billows crested with their diamond foam
On emerald shores, or in whose lucid calm
The stars slept imaged. Earth from pole to pole
Was one illimitable Paradise,—
Albeit Emmanuel's land was as that spot
In Eden, where the blossoming tree of life
Grew with the tree of knowledge intertwined,—
The presence-chamber of the King of kings,
The temple of the world.[2]

The land where our Lord lived His earthly life, the soil pressed by His human feet, the spots consecrated by His birth and death, must needs be of special interest to all His people of every age and race. The angels were often seen there, with faces

[1] Alexander Maclaren, D.D. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

indicating that His human life is still wonderful and mysterious to them, a thing which they "desire to look into." Our Lord Himself now and then paused at certain hallowed spots for a moment, and there was a look in His eyes that made those who saw it fall on their knees in silence, their hearts too full even for songs of praise. But the song burst forth with redoubled power and sweetness—afterward. That Land was the garden of the new earth, as Jerusalem was its metropolis,—its "mother-city," as the Greek hath it,—not so much by reason of its size and splendor as its beauty and interest. Hither the nations came from time to time for worship; and hither came the Lord to meet them, and bless them with His visible presence, the charm of His beauty, and the warmth of His love.[1]

It was most interesting to see in this renewed and glorified life how truly the present always is and must be the outcome of the past. To every inhabitant clung characteristics, habits, peculiarities, ways of thinking and acting, that showed the undying influence of the old earth-life. There was still something in each, some subtle quality or spirit, that proclaimed the nation to which he belonged and the sort of life he had led. There is no loss of individuality in the new life.[2]

Crossing the sea does not revolutionize characters. Crossing the narrow stream of death makes no more revolution. Men are fitting themselves to be what they will be, whether in New York or in the new heavens and earth.[3]

[1] L. M. Wooster. [2] J. L. Markham. [3] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D.

It is probable that life on the new earth will resemble life on the former earth. There will be work to do. There will be progress to make. There will be mutual kindliness and helpfulness. There will be homes and workshops, libraries and temples. Art and literature, music and song, philosophy and science, will still lend beauty and interest to life. Nature will be lovely, rich, and fertile. The people will not be confined to this particular one of the "many mansions"; intercourse with, change of residence to, other planets will be possible. Life will run its course with a full, free, clear, inexhaustible tide. The one great difference between the new and the old—a difference so vast and vital that words fail to express it — is that Love will reign supreme. Selfishness, together with sin and sorrow, will have ceased to be.

It is a picture that one cannot realize even while one is trying to paint it. One feels like echoing the prayer of the anguished father: "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!" Yet how much poorer we should be if we could in nowise believe! For some such picture of a life that is to be—in outline if not in detail—most of us cherish in our deeper heart, and it helps us to live the life that now is.[1]

Then life is,—to wake, not sleep,
  Rise and not rest, but press
From earth's level where blindly creep
  Things perfected, more or less,
To the heaven's height, far and steep,

[1] Jean Lomond.

Where, amid what strifes and storms
  May wait the adventurous quest,
Power is Love,—transports, transforms
  Who aspired from worst to best,
Sought the soul's world, spurned the worm's:

I have faith such end shall be.[1]

[1] Robert Browning.

Speaking Softly of Hope

What can we do, o'er whom the unbeholden
Hangs in a night wherewith we dare not cope?
What but look sunward, and with faces golden
Speak to each other softly of hope?

UNIDENTIFIED.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

TENNYSON.

My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That after Last returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best can't be worst,
Nor what God blessed once prove accurst.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Pure love is the only eternal fire.

MME. DE LA MOTTE GUYON.

XXI

THE question whether probation continues after death is one that has occupied many minds, yet no definitive answer has been or can be given. But it may be suggested that, even if there be nothing like what we understand by probation, in the sense of uncertainty as to the result, there may be opportunity for development from a low state of spiritual vitality to a higher one; for we are told that God will "not quench the smoking flax." And this opens a wide door to hope. For, though there may be many who are evidently not fit for an immediate entrance into Heaven, few of us would pronounce them fit only for an immediate entrance into Hell. People who have much to do with the criminal class testify that they rarely meet with those who are wholly bad. Instances of heroism, of self-sacrifice, of brotherly kindness, now and then blossom out of the most unlikely soil,—soil that is set down by the ordinary observer as hopelessly infertile. Nor should it be forgotten that in most cases this infertility is the natural result of the environment. It has been said that some souls are not so much born into the world as "damned into it"; they have been surrounded by evil influences from birth. And we all know the tremendous power of environment,

atmosphere, contiguity. We know how comparatively easy it is to be good with the good, bad with the bad, studious with the studious, and idle with the idle,—may not the same tendency prevail in the future life? If sinful, apparently hardened souls were placed in some region of the intermediate state where only good influences were skilfully brought to bear upon them, it is by no means certain that they would for ever remain unresponsive. Or if they were to be placed where every evil thought, or word, or deed received at once its due and appropriate punishment, does it not seem probable that reformation would eventually follow? In this life punishment often comes so slowly that the sinner doubts if it will come at all. Punishment, to be reformatory, needs to be speedy. Punishment that is *not* meant to be reformatory seems to belong rather to blind human justice than to that of the All-wise, All-loving, and All-powerful Father.[1]

> Wilt Thou not make, Eternal Source and Goal,
> In Thy long years life's broken purpose whole,
> And change to praise the cry of a Lost Soul?[2]

Some allowance may be made for a change in the point of view,—so often followed by a corresponding change in feeling.

For the first time in its experience the soul, freed from the body, is face to face with the realities of the unseen world. The mists of time, and all doubts as to the reality of a conscious hereafter, the uncer-

[1] L. M. Wooster. [2] Whittier.

tainties and perplexities that have almost hidden God from the soul during life, are now swept away for ever, and the dim faith that has hitherto flickered in the soul leaps up to the fullest knowledge. If it be true that here "we have but faith, we cannot know, for knowledge is of things we see," then it is also true that after death for the first time the soul sees God no longer "through a glass darkly," but face to face. In the clear light of the other world comes the realization of the meaning of the great Apostle, "Then I shall know even as I am known." Who can say that, through this illumination, in the passionless atmosphere of the new life, the soul may not instantly see its own imperfection and turn to God with a strong act of the will, renouncing evil and choosing good now that, for the first time, good and evil are seen in their true light? While, therefore, there is no reason for supposing that the mere act of dying can change the condition of the soul, there is no apparent reason why the entry of the soul into an entirely new mode of life may not alter the attitude of the will towards righteousness and evil.[1]

It is life that deadens minds, death gives a newness and freshness to them; the mask is thrown off; the day of truth has dawned, and none has seen the dawn of that day without being refreshed and strengthened by it.[2]

We are at best like tropical plants struggling beneath ungenial skies, with stunted growth, which can bear no fruit nor expand into flower, but which, if transplanted into the regions of the sun, would

[1] Rev. R. E. Hutton. [2] Rev. J. B. Mozley, D.D.

develop into richest fruit. . . . This same law nourishes Christian hope, through the belief that the faint, feeble beginnings of this season of struggles and fears, while the corruptible body weighs down the soul, far off from God, when transferred to more genial skies shall, if not here, yet there, expand into their predestined fulness.[1]

"On the supposition that there is no change nor progress in the intermediate state, then it follows that there is a long period in which the operations of God's Spirit are suspended, and an imperfect soul is left to stagnate in its imperfection." But this is unworthy to be believed in comparison with the truth that the soul of man progresses to purity through the activities of Paradise. Progress is the law of life written everywhere by the hand of God. We can think of no object, unless it be dead, inanimate matter, which is not passing through its cycles of progress; and even the dead, inanimate creations of rock and stone, hillside and valley, through the centuries of evolution have progressed from the poison-breeding climate of the carboniferous age down to the pleasant landscapes that are fitted for man's abode. And of history, and ethics, and men's moral movements, the trend has always been from the lower to the higher, as if all nature were imbosomed by "a power that makes for righteousness." Given conscious life, the result must ever be progress. Therefore the conception of a state in which the soul, being conscious, must remain abso-

[1] T. T. Carter.

lutely in the same ethical state as that in which it left the body contradicts all the analogies of nature, as it does all those Scriptures which are the basis of the belief of Christendom.[1]

In the parable of Dives and Lazarus we are distinctly given to understand that the rich man's sin had been his selfishness. It appears that this selfishness was fostered by the ease and luxury in which he lived. Now, no sooner has the rich man passed into Hades than we notice not only a change of environment, but also a change manifesting itself in his character. The rich man no longer finds all his wants satisfied, but, on the contrary, he is tortured by thirst. Suffering thus himself, he has already, we notice, so far learned the lesson that he has to learn that he is unselfishly anxious for the fate and welfare of his brethren on earth. The parable furnishes a scriptural basis for a hope that has always found a place in the heart of Christendom, and is to-day more than ever insisted on by all thoughtful people,—a hope that hereafter some may be taught lessons that they have failed to learn here on earth, and so be saved "yet so as by fire." [2]

We came not in with proud,
Firm, martial footsteps, in a measured tread
Slow pacing to the crash of music loud: . . .
With faces darkened in the battle flame,
With banners faded from their early pride,
Through wind and sun and showers of bleaching rain,
Still red in all our garments, doubly dyed,

[1] Rev. Charles H. Strong. [2] Rev. R. E. Hutton.

With many a wound upon us, many a stain,
We came with steps that faltered,—Yet we came.[1]

A shipwrecked mariner is saved when he has reached the shore naked and bruised and bleeding and helpless; but he is not therefore on an equality with those who have not been shipwrecked. A sick man is saved when his malady is mastered; but it may take him years to reach the state of health from which he has fallen. So it is in the spiritual life.[2]

We may—probably we must—believe that the upward progress of the soul from comparative darkness to comparative light, from the nature that is "prone to evil" to the nature that desires and seeks after good, will at first be slow and painful. The ladder to be climbed is steep, the pace halting, the courage wavering; but it would be treason to the Father to believe that aid will not be given in the time of sorest need. Kindly human spirits or strong angels will surely be ready to hold out a helping hand to every soul that has once set its will and its feet in the upward path. And though it may never attain the altitude of those who began the long ascent earlier, it may reach a place of safety and peace and joy in the lower planes of God's love and mercy. And of such souls may it not be prophesied that they will "love much"?[3]

Give me the lowest place; or if for me
That lowest place too high, make one more low

[1] Dora Greenwell. [2] Malcolm MacColl, D.D.
[3] Leonard Mason.

Where I may sit and see
My God, and love Thee so.[1]

What? Shall nature fill the hollows of her coarse, rough flints with purple amethyst; shall she, out of the grimy coal, over which the shivering beggar warms himself, form the diamond that trembles on the brow of a queen; shall even man take the cast-off slag and worthless rubble from the furnace and educe from it his most glowing and lustrous dyes; and shall God not be able to make anything of His ruined souls? Or shall we not rather believe, as the wise woman of Tekoah said to David three thousand years ago: "We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground; neither does God respect any person; yet doth He devise means, that His banished be not expelled from Him"?*[2]

Let us not doubt that for all who sin through invincible ignorance in faith or morals, a place of repentance and amendment will be found in one of the many mansions provided by the Father of all. And must we not also believe that a dwelling-place suitable to their needs will likewise be found for those imperfect characters of whom I have spoken, —persons of good intentions, but of weak and wavering wills,—the result perhaps of ancestral sins, —struggling against temptation with but indifferent success till death overtakes them? No one can

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

* R. V.—God does not take away life, but devises devices that the wanderer be not for ever expelled from Him.

[2] Rev. F. W. Farrar, D.D.

perish in whom any spark of the divine life is still burning.[1]

> How should Grace
> One living gem disown,
> One pearly mote, one diamond small,
> One sparkle of the unearthly light? . . .
> Go where the waters fall
> Sheer from the mountain's height;
> They rush and roar, they whirl and leap,
> Not wilder drives the wintry storm,
> Yet strong law they keep,
> Strange powers their course inform.
> Yet in dim caves they softly blend
> In dreams of mortals unespied;
> One in their awful end,
> One their unfailing Guide.[2]

No doubt we are taught that in the present dispensation the saved are a small number compared with the lost; but Scripture affords ample grounds for believing that it will not be always thus, and that ultimately the saved number of Adam's race will outnumber the lost to a degree beyond all calculation. The tenderest heart that ever beat in human breast is cold and hard compared with the living heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we are assured that "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied."[3]

It is not easy to believe that He can ever really be satisfied with anything less than the ultimate redemption of the whole human race. It is not easy

[1] Malcolm MacColl, D.D. [2] John Keble. [3] *The Record.*

to think that He who once went to preach to "spirits in prison" and to set them free may not do the same thing again and again as long as there are any such spirits to respond to His ministration.[1]

All reason, all experience, all Scripture, unite in the teaching that the divine work of teaching goes on behind as well as before the veil.[2]

God forbid that I should limit the time for acquiring faith to the present life! In the depths of the Divine mercy there may be opportunity to win it in the future state.[3]

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
  Will be the final goal of ill,
  To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet,
  That not one life shall be destroyed,
  Or cast as rubbish in the void,
When God shall make the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain,
  That not a moth in vain desire
  Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.[4]

It can in no sense be said to agree with the justice of God to punish temporal crimes with eternal punishments; because, if justice preserves a proportion

[1] Julius Woodward.
[2] A. J. Beresford Hope.
[3] Martin Luther, letter to Hansen von Rechenberg, 1522. Quoted by W. R. Alger.
[4] Tennyson.

between offences, between temporal sins and eternal punishments there can be no manner of proportion. And if it be so hard to reconcile this with the justice of God, it will be much more so to explain how it can possibly consist with that mercy and goodness which we so much ascribe to Him.[1]

Implacability is not regarded as an excellence in men; wherefore should it seem so in God? What human heart is not touched by those noble, tender words of Lavater?—"I embraced in my heart all that is called man, past, present, and future, times and nations, the dead, the damned, even Satan. I presented them all to God, with the warmest wishes that He would have mercy upon all." And can man be more pitying, more merciful than God? I cannot believe so.[2]

I must believe that Thy grace will sooner or later superabound where sin hath most abounded, till I can think a little Drop of Being, and but one remove from Nothing, can excel in Goodness that Ocean of Goodness which hath neither bottom nor surface. . . . All the goodness which is anywhere to be found scattered among the creatures is sent forth from Thee, the Fountain, the Sea of all Goodness. Into this Sea of Goodness I deliver myself and all my fellow-creatures. Thou art Love, and canst no more cease to be so than to be Thyself: take Thine own methods with us, and submit us to them.[3]

I must believe, too, that He who ordered His dis-

[1] Archbishop Tillotson. [2] J. L. Markham.
[3] Jer. White, Chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, 1712. Quoted by Farrar.

ciples to gather up the fragments of perishable human food will not fail to gather up Himself every fragment of human goodness, however intermixed with or overshadowed by human evil. For goodness, by its very nature, is imperishable, while evil, we trust, will ultimately be done away with for evermore.[1]

There shall never be one lost good! What was,
shall live as before;
The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying
sound;
What was good shall be good, with for evil so much
good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven the
perfect round.[2]

We are told that finally God will be "all in all." This can hardly be taken to mean that to a considerable portion of His children He shall be as nothing. Nothing, at least, but a stern, implacable Judge, whose least sentence is to punishment for life—eternal life! We cannot believe in any such drawback from the universality of His power and goodness and love.[3]

Our whole nature leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to God, and to deny all imperfection of Him. . . . And from hence we conclude that virtue must be the happiness and vice the misery of every creature, and that regularity and order and right cannot but finally prevail in a universe under His government.[4]

[1] Julian L. Mackensie.
[2] Robert Browning.
[3] Marcus Werner.
[4] Bishop Butler.

That without holiness none shall see the Lord; that every guilty deed, if unrepented of, must bring its own just and awful retribution; that for every impure and cruel soul there remaineth behind the cloud of this world the dark night of the next,—*that* I know. But when I remember that even these have been known to burst into tears at a mother's name, that even these have been known at times to flash out into high deeds of momentary heroism, I see that God's Spirit has nowhere taught us that He who gave cannot give back, that He who made them innocent children cannot restore their innocence, that He who created them—He who "will have all men to be saved"—cannot recreate them in His own image.[1]

The failure of the least note leaves the whole harmony of the universe imperfect. Yet if it fail there is the possibility of restoration. A discord resolved seems to give at last a richer fulness to the completed strain. "There is joy," as we read, "in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." In that thought lies "comfort."[2]

He is gone. . . . Spirit has mingled with spirit. A child more or less loving has gone home. Unloved by his Father? Believe it who may, that will not I.[3]

Behold, we know not anything:
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last to all,
And every winter change to spring.

[1] F. W. Farrar, D.D. [2] Bishop Brooke Foss Westcott.
[3] F. W. Robertson.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.[1]

We may say that no one will finally be lost whom Almighty Love can save. If the door of hope be closed, it is by the sinner himself. Jesus rebuked one who asked Him, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" by the practical answer, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." It was not a matter for idle curiosity, for speculation about others, but for practical conduct; for each one to strive to make his own calling and election sure.[2]

[1] Tennyson.

[2] Rev. Malcolm MacColl, D.D.

The City of God

When earth shall pass away with all
Her pride of pomp and sin,
The City builded without hands
Shall safely shut me in.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

The Church of God in its complete perfection at the last will be the City of God,—so says the Bible always, and there is meaning in the figure,—the manifoldness of all life all uttering the indwelling God in the city which is the Church.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

Forth from that last corporeal are we come
Into the Heaven that is unbodied light,—
Light intellectual replete with love,—
Love of true happiness replete with joy,—
Joy that transcends all sweetness of delight.

DANTE.

XXII

THE sacred writers make use of everything that is beautiful and splendid on earth to prefigure for us the glories of Heaven. Gold, jewels, stars, resplendence, thrones, crowns, palms, spotless and lustrous raiment, music, song, flowers, fruits, shining waters, love, joy, peace,—all lend their aid to the picture of the celestial city and its inhabitants:—what does it all mean?[1]

> Thou wondrously fair City, what
> Can mean thy dazzling light?
> And what thy golden pavements broad,
> Thy singers robed in white?
> What mean thy walls bejewelled, what
> Thy gates of pearl so strong?
> Now, thy impressive silences,
> Now, thy far-sounding song?[2]

Figures have no value except as they express reality; and the figures which the Holy Spirit employs must be the nearest and truest of all possible expressions, even though the realities be both unseen and inconceivable. Therefore the simple mind which reposes entirely in the figures, and imagines Heaven to be such a scene, is in no error, except

[1] Martin Worth. [2] Denis Wortman, D.D.

that it thinks as a child, and sees through a glass darkly; and it is in less danger of delusion than the stronger intellect which casts the figure, and with it the reality, entirely away.[1]

Neither is the more imaginative mind to be blamed that looks upon these figures as an invitation, or at least a permission, to try to picture to itself the underlying realities. Both methods are lawful; either may bring help and comfort, inspiration and stimulation, to the devout soul, seeking not to be "wise above what is written," but to read something of what is suggested or implied between the lines thereof.[2]

Imagination is a God-given faculty, not to be suppressed, but to be freely used. . . . It is a mistake to think . . . that all knowledge comes through the intellect, and that we must understand before we can receive. A great deal comes through the sympathies, the emotions, the imagination, and through these the writer of fiction often addresses himself to us more effectively than either the historian, the philosopher, or the moralist.[3]

Is it worth our while to ask where is this Heaven, —the Heaven of heavens, the last and best of all possible abodes, the New Jerusalem, the City of God? No certain answer can be given to the question, but it may not be amiss to mention that a German scientist,[4] after years of diligent study and abstruse calculations, came to the conclusion "that

[1] Bishop George Burgess.
[2] Julia Wood.
[3] Lyman Abbott.
[4] Mädler, of Dorpat.

Alcyone, the principal star in the group of the Pleiades, now occupies the centre of gravity, and is at present the sun about which the universe of stars composing our astral system are revolving." Human understanding staggers when it tries to realize that eighteen millions of years are required for a single revolution of our sun around this distant luminary. How near to or far from the truth the scientist's conjecture may be, or how many other and remoter suns and systems there are in the illimitable regions of infinite space, it is impossible for us to tell; but both science and analogy teach us that somewhere in God's vast creation there must be a central spot, around which this "august totality of revolving orbs and firmaments" for ever circles in regular order,—a spot that is the astronomic centre of the universe, a spot that is itself ever at complete and majestic rest. And it is reasonable to suppose that *there* is the capital, the metropolitan city of the Better Country, that there God especially manifests Himself, that there is the throne on which He sits in light unapproachable, except as He graciously tempers it to the capacities of those to whom He grants the unspeakable happiness of the Beatific Vision.[1]

All round and round, in spacious circuit wide,
Mountains of tallest stature circumscribe
The plains of Paradise, whose tops arrayed
In uncreated radiance seem so pure
That naught but angel's foot or saint's elect

[1] John Worden.

Of God may venture there to walk.
And hence, in middle heaven remote, is seen
The mount of God in awful glory bright.[1]

Terribly sublime
It rose. The mountains at its base, albeit
Loftier than lonely Ararat, appeared
But footsteps to a monarch's throne. The top
Was often lost in clouds, clouds all impregn
With light, and girdled with a rainbow arch
Of opal and of emerald. For there—
Not as on Sinai with thick-flashing flames,
But veiling His essential majesty
In robes of glory woven by Himself—
He dwells whose dwelling is the universe
Of all things, and whose full-orbed countenance
The Son alone sustains.[2]

Above the city stood
No sun, yet forth she looked, clear as the sun,
Fair as the moon, and terrible as some
Great army. And the shining of her walls
Was like the glory of a golden dawn
On stainless snow.[3]

Never eye
Of mortal man had seen, nor ear had heard,
Though ravished with the distant fame thereof,
Glory like this; the handiwork of God,
And fashioned of Heaven's choice material—light,—
Through which the Light of light translucent shone;

[1] Robert Pollok. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [3] B. M.

The mansion of creation's Architect;
The palace of the Everlasting King;—
Its gates of pearl, its edifice of gold,
Its very streets of pure crystalline gold,
Its walls on twelve foundations superposed
(Of which divine realities the earth
Can only lend its feeble semblances),—
The jasper streaked with many a tender dye,
The sapphire of celestial blue serene;
The agate once Chalcedon's peerless boast,
The fathomless repose of emerald,
The ruby and blood-tinctured sardonyx,
The chrysolite like amber sheathing fire,
The beryl emulous of ocean's sheen,
The opal-tinted topaz clear as glass,
The soft pale purple of the chrysoprase,
The Melibœan hyacinth, and last,
The lucid violet of amethyst.[1]

Not without reason, we may be sure, are the gates of the City made of pearl. That snowy, sheeny substance is said to be the result of irritation caused to the pearl oyster by the introduction of some sort of harsh extraneous matter into its shell. Unable to get rid of the intruder, it patiently overlays it with nacre, and thus turns a worthless and painful object into one of the most precious of jewels, worthy to shine on the breast of a bride or in the crown of a king.[2]

And because pearls stand connected with one form of suffering, therefore I think we may view them as

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth. [2] Julian Woodworth.

representative of the precious fruits of all worthily borne human suffering; and because they form gates of entrance (exit, thanks be to God! is not in question) they connect themselves vividly with that "great tribulation" out of which came the general assembly of the saints as St. John beheld them in vision. . . .

But wherefore gates at all if never to be shut? The full "wherefore" may abide hidden, yet in this as in many another instance one may elicit a lesson without fathoming the mystery.

The gates bear perpetual witness that man inhabits Heaven not of right but of grace. The morning stars which sang together, the sons of God who shout for joy, are (so to say) aborigines of the heavenly country: not so man, whose life is a resurrection from death, whose sonship is by adoption, whose freedom commenced in enfranchisement, whose citizenship is conferred, not natal. The open gates bear permanent witness to human free will, still free even when made indefectible. "A brother or a sister is not under bondage." The gate of Eden honors Law; the gates of New Jerusalem honor Love.[1]

But all this is only the outer court, or at least not the holiest of all: now we have ascended the steps, may we look within the veil? May we shew what this Rest containeth, as well as what it presupposeth? But also, alas, how little know I of that whereof I am to speak! Shall I speak before I know? But if

[1] Christina Rossetti.

I stay until I clearly know, I shall not come again to speak. . . . I 'll speak, while I may, that little, very little, which I do know of,—I, rather than to be wholly silent.[1]

Heaven is the metropolis of God. It is the residence of angels. Its antiquity is eternal. Its wealth is infinite. The architecture of the City of God is unlike anything of human design. Light, unlike the shining and the flames that blaze over the earth, illumines it.[2]

The shining firmament, with all the luminaries that adorn it, are but the frontispiece to the highest Heaven. All the lustre of diamonds, the fire of carbuncles and rubies, the brightness of pearls, are dead in comparison with its glory.[3]

I scarcely know what I mean by "glory." Think of a perfect sunrise or sunset. Think of a noble poem, a stately piece of music,—I call these glorious. It means something unspeakably splendid, which appeals in the highest degree to my sense of beauty, and kindles my joy, and rouses my enthusiasm.[4]

I looked
And in the likeness of a river saw
Light flowing, from whose amber-seeming waves
Flashed up effulgence, as they glided on
'Twixt banks on either side painted with Spring,
Incredible how fair! and from the tide
There ever and anon outstarting flew
Sparkles instinct with life; and in the flowers

[1] Richard Baxter.
[2] Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D.
[3] William Bates, D.D.
[4] Rev. W. J. Knox-Little.

Did set them like to rubies chased in gold;
Then, as if drunk with odors, plunged again
Into the wondrous flood, from which, as one
Re-entered, still another rose . . .
. . . Our mortal speech,
Nor e'en the inward shaping of the brain,
Hath colors fine enough to trace such folds.[1]

There are many scenes on this earth of such surpassing grandeur, sublimity, and beauty, that no words can adequately describe them, no photographic art can faithfully portray them, no artist's brush can transfer them to canvas. Of such scenes we say that they must be seen to be appreciated. If this be true of some things on earth, how much more true it is of Heaven itself! What *is* claimed is that the Bible sets forth Heaven as a definite, tangible place of abode.[2]

A city, or a temple, or a home,
Or, rather, all in one. Enriched it was
With every exquisite design of love,
And every form of beauty. Not a film
Stained its bright pavement of transparent gold;
Not a harsh murmur vexed its silences,
Or with the melodies of angels jarred.
No cloud darkened its empyrean. Joy
Held court there in its own metropolis.[3]

The worship there shall all be praise. No prayer shall be there, for there shall be no sense of want.

[1] Dante. [2] Archibald McCullagh, D.D.
[3] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

All is praise, for all is manifestation and light. All is praise, for all is triumph. All is praise, for all is blessedness and enjoyment. Whatever the feeling, eternal praise is the expression of it,—from the breathing whisper of adoring love which flits through the prostrate ranks of the redeemed to the full chorus of praise,—the high, universal shout of glory and honor and blessing to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.[1]

Oh, think of that assembly;
Their beauty and their peace,—
Souls perfect, yet receiving
Love's infinite increase;
In full illumination,
Knowing as they are known,
The transitory ended
And the imperfect flown!

Henceforward and for ever
They live—live unto God;
He is their source, their object,
Their light and their abode.
As sea-flowers in the ocean,
As white clouds in the air,
He forms them and expands them,
Is round them everywhere.

His joy is through them spreading,
His will their will sustains:
Joint heirs, in rich possession
Of Christ's eternal gains,

[1] R. Watson.

With vision all unclouded
They see Him face to face,
Share in His intercessions
And ministries of grace.[1]

New Jerusalem has been gathered from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven; stone by stone, soul by soul, here a little and there a little. Laps of luxury, fires of temptation, ease of riches, squalor of destitution, pinnacles of giddy exaltation, mountains of difficulty, valleys of humiliation,—each has sent up its prefixed weight, number, measure, nothing lacking, nothing over. Redeemed, called by name, claimed, precious, honorable, beloved, brought from the East and gathered from the West, given up by the North and by the South kept not back, God's sons have been brought from far, and His daughters from the ends of the earth:

Up the steeps of Zion
They are mounting,
Coming, coming,
Throngs beyond man's counting;
With a sound
Like innumerable bees
Swarming, humming
Where flowering trees
Many-tinted,
Many-scented,
All alike
Abound with honey;

[1] Caroline M. Noel.

With a swell
Like a blast upswaying unrestrainable,
From a shadowed dell
To the hilltops sunny;
With a thunder
Like the ocean when in strength,
Breadth and length
It sets to shore;
Waves on waves redoubled pour,
Leaping, flashing to the shore
(Unlike the under
Drain of ebb that loseth ground
For all its roar),
They are thronging
From the East
And from the West,
From the North and South,
Saints are thronging,
Loving, longing,
To their land
Of rest,—
Palm in hand
And praise in mouth.[1]

How can we believe in this countless array of immortals who come swarming up out of all the lands and all the ages? There is only one way. Multiply numbers as enormously as you will, and the result is finite still. Then set the finite, however large, into the presence of the infinite, and it is small. Its limi-

[1] Christina G. Rossetti.

tations show. There is no finite, however vast, that can overcrowd the infinite; none that the infinite cannot most easily grasp and hold. Here must be the real solution of our difficulty,—in the infinity of God.[1]

The endless ages ebb and flow,
The endless harvests riper grow;
Fast in the rich eternal mould
The heart's deep roots take hold—take hold
With the strong joy of permanence,
Never to be transplanted thence.
Sweet songs are sung to very close,
Sweet closes recommence and blend;
And still as rosebud answers rose
The new strains grow, the old strains end.
For ever means for ever there;
New joy past sorrow reconciles,
And, hung in clear and golden air,
An undeceiving morrow smiles;
While Love the law and Love the sun
Blesses and warms and saves each one;
And God's dear Will, our earthly prayer,
Is made quite plain and perfect there.[2]

Whatever else varies, one condition abides invariable: the heavenly host is absolutely at one with God Omnipotent in will, choice, approval, pleasure. The free will of the Creator and the free will of the creature in Heaven coalesce in one eternal concord, one indissoluble harmony. Nevertheless, from first

[1] Phillips Brooks. [2] Susan Coolidge.

to last (so far as last can be predicated of aught which ends not) both wills are and will be free.[1]

The glory, the joy, the peace of Heaven are, we believe, positive things, and the heart delights in that positiveness; yet for a moment it may not be unprofitable to think of its negatives, both large and small. And, first, there will be no temptation to evil there. There will be no hesitation between self-indulgence and self-denial, no weighing and balancing of the attractions of wrong against those of right.[2]

There will be no noise, no rudeness, no fatigue there; no want of suitable accommodations; no perilous locomotion nor one jarring vehicle in all that world; no deceptive, petulant, profane guides, —angels never ask for fees. In our Father's house are many mansions, but no confined, ill-ventilated, infectious rooms. Bolts are not required; bills are not presented; police are not needed in the New Jerusalem.[3]

There will be no dust, no dirt, no confusion, no disorder; no crying children nor scolding parents; no falsehood nor treachery; no speciousness nor bewilderment; no prisons, no saloons, no tenement houses.[4]

Within thy hallowed courts are found
No lurking care to vex or wound;
No dim eye sheds the hopeless tear;
No bosom throbs with doubt or fear;
And hushed is shame's tumultuous thrill;
And passion's warring voice is still.[5]

[1] Christina G. Rossetti. [2] Lynn M. Woods.
[3] Rev. Augustus C. Thompson. [4] L. M. [5] ——— Dale.

Moreover, in that world which the King who sits upon the throne shall create, we are told, "There shall be no more death." No funeral cortège shall wind its way over the golden pavement; no cypress trees shall grow beside the river of life; no sob of mourner shall mingle with the songs of the redeemed; no flower fade, no leaf shrivel, not a babe languish, and for ever and for ever. And all the spiritual constituents of death, which have accompanied the dissolution of the body, shall in the case of those who have accepted eternal life by faith in Jesus be for ever obliterated, or made the channels through which rivers of unending bliss shall eternally flow.[1]

In fact, it appears that the imperfections, the limitations, the disappointments of earth will help to bring forth the fulness and the fruitions of Heaven. Things that we longed for and could not have, things that we kept only long enough to know their preciousness and then lost,—all these will be either given us or superseded by something still more dear and congenial.[2]

There are the harvests reaped once sown in tears:
There is the rest by ministry enhanced;
There is the banquet of the wine of heaven,
Riches of glory incorruptible.[3]

The perfection of the heavenly inheritance is indicated by the word "incorruptible." Corruption destroys man's earthly possessions. He rises early and late takes rest, but vainly seeks enduring substance,

[1] F. B. Meyer. [2] Mortimer Washburn.
[3] Rev. Robert Pollok.

and must ever renew his work. His grain decays. His house is no sooner finished than it begins to waste away. The dearly loved body begins to die from the day of its birth, and every breath and heart-beat hasten the end. . . . The "new birth" is of incorruptible seed, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.[1]

Yet we must beware of associating with eternal life anything like monotony or dull uniformity. Variety is an element of interest and pleasure. Change is not in itself an evil, but rather an indication of life, energy, progress.[2]

All that we can learn of happiness from human experience would seem to show that it is inconsistent with immobility; and immobility is not, we are taught, by any means, a necessary condition of the blessed. In their endless duration of happiness there may, therefore, be vast mutations; but such mutations cannot be to a lower degree of happiness, but must be within the same degree or to degrees higher. If the latter, then such mutations would constitute a celestial evolution.[3]

True to human nature, the Bible brings before us pictures of such changes. It speaks to us, indeed, of the everlasting materials of the heavenly city, but it shows us in the midst of the streets and on either side of the river the tree of life bearing twelve manner of fruits, to which every month brings the freshness of spring and the ripeness and mellowness of

[1] Rev. S. F. Hotchkin. [2] Juliet Lee Maclane.
[3] St. George Mivart.

autumn, which shows in constant succession opening and fading blossoms and falling fruits. And the river in whose waters the healing foliage and satisfying fruit are mirrored is no dull Lethe, stagnant and motionless, for ever the same, but a river of life, incessantly changing and being renewed—the very fulness of all life—in which past, present, and future are seen in perpetual flux. And these objects are typical and representative.[1]

More deep than the seas is that River,
More full than their manifold tides,
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows and abides.

Pure gold is the bed of that River
(The gold of that land is the best),
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows to its rest.

Oh, goodly the banks of that River,
Oh, goodly the fruits that they bear,
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows and is fair.

For lo! on each bank of that River
The Tree of Life, life-giving, grows,
Where for ever and ever and ever
The pure River flows.[2]

This river, that lends its beauty, its mingled passing and permanence, to the heavenly city, conveys an image both distinct and delightful to our minds

[1] Hugh Macmillan, D.D. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.

because of our familiarity with the beauty and beneficence of earthly rivers. But our vision of the sea of glass, mingled with fire, before the throne of God, and its marvellous reflections, is much less clear and intelligent. Nevertheless there are lessons to be learned from it, even though we may not penetrate to the depths of its meaning and its secret.[1]

Fire is added not to consume, but "mingled" with that sea to illuminate, flash, augment beauty; even as the fiery opal would not be half itself without its spark. For Redemption excels Creation; and the fiery trial through which the elect have pressed after Christ, being past as trial, endures as a perpetual splendor. None but victors stand upon that sea. . . . An untroubled sea, or it could not be "of glass"; a pure sea, or it could not be "like unto crystal." But wherefore before the throne? However fathomless its depths, its surface appears as a vast permanent mirror, reflecting all which surrounds it.[2]

It reflects, too, "all earth-scenes as they pass." Looking into its clear depths, the angels may learn from it when and where they are needed. The saints may learn something of those in whom they are still interested.

"Ingracèd into so high favor there,
The saints with their beaupeers whole worlds outwear,
And things unseen do see, and things unheard do hear."

What other uses it may serve is beyond the power of my imaginings. I recognize it as beautiful, but

[1] Jean Lomond. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.

also as most mysterious, one of those mysteries that only the future life can unfold.[1]

> The gates were open, and the voice of them
> That sing for joy of heart was heard again
> Within.[2]

Music is the universal language of the innermost spiritual nature. All that we cultivate of its highest spirit in its great religious expressions here will go with us a preparation for eternity. Heaven is revealed to earth as the home-land of music. . . . In Revelation we read of "The voice of harpers harping with their harps." The voice is (so to say) the saint's self, the harp is his possession; the voice is what he had to train, the harping what he had to acquire: all that he has and all that he is make up his perpetual offering before the throne. To present this offering is his inexhaustible pleasure. Even on earth, who that sings well or plays well on an instrument knows not the joy of making music? Merely to listen ofttimes moves to tears, to lightheartedness, to longings, to feelings one would not or could not utter. What will it be in Heaven to be singer, musician, listener; to be one voice in a harmony, yet as one individually listened to, approved, commended, as if summoned to sing all alone in Heaven's half-hour of silence?[3]

> And when within that lovely Paradise
> At last we safely dwell,
> From out our blissful souls what songs shall rise,

[1] Julius Woodward. [2] B. M. [3] Christina G. Rossetti.

What joy our lips shall tell,
While holy saints are singing
Hosannas o'er and o'er,
Pure Hallelujahs ringing
Around us evermore!

Innumerous choirs before the shining Throne
Their joyful anthems raise,
Till Heaven's glad halls are echoing with the tone
Of that great hymn of praise;
And all its host rejoices,
And all its blessed throng
Unite their myriad voices
In one eternal song.

Before the great Three-One
They all exulting stand,
And tell the wonders He has done
Through all their land;
The listening spheres attend,
And swell the growing fame,
And sing, in songs that never end,
The wondrous Name![1]

A heaven of ceaseless music?—a monotonous heaven, a heaven of ceaseless weariness, say some.

Yet surely this heaven of music (if for argument's sake we may so define the Christian Heaven of the Beatific Vision) is obviously and characteristically otherwise.

For is music monotonous? On the contrary, a

[1] Thomas Olivers, 1772.

monotone is not music. No single note, however ravishing, amounts to music: musical it may be, but not music.

How is it to become an element of music? By forming part of a sequence. Change, succession, are of the essence of music.

Therefore, when our Christian Heaven is, by condescension to man's limited conceptions, presented as a heaven of music, that very figure stamps it as a heaven, not of monotony, but of variety, for in music one sound leads unavoidably to a different sound; one harmony paves the way to a diverse harmony.

A heaven of music seems rather a heaven of endless progression, of inexhaustible variety, than a heaven of monotony.[1]

Nor is it necessary to suppose that the heavenly citizens spend all their time in singing, nor that endless praise implies continual song by each and all, but simply relays of voices and instruments. As one and another cease, others far or near take up the strain, or begin a new one, so that in some part of the "dedicated city, dearly loved of God," the perpetual melody is poured or the exultant harmony is heard, yet no one is engaged in a continuous service of song,—there are other delightful things to do in Heaven.[2]

> But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
> The saints triumphant stand in bright array;
> The King of Glory passes on His way,—
> Alleluia![3]

[1] Christina G. Rossetti. [2] Leon M. Woodbridge.
[3] Bishop W. W. How.

There is nothing irrational or unscriptural in supposing that there are stated periods in Heaven as there are on earth,—great days of the Lord, when saints and angels gather from all parts of Heaven before the Lord, and give expression to their exultant joy in rapturous and thrilling songs which fill Heaven with the echo;—

> "High recurring festivals that stand
> On the sidereal kalends marked in light."[1]

Heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud Hosannas filled
The eternal regions: lowly reverent,
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns, inwove with amaranth and gold,—
Immortal amaranth, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life,
Began to bloom, but soon, for man's offence,
To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows
And flowers aloft, shading the fount of life,
And where the river of bliss through midst of Heaven
Rolls o'er elysian fields her amber stream;—
With these, that never fade, the spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams.
Now in loose garlands, thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like sea of jasper shone,
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took—
Harps ever tuned that, glittering by their side,
Like quivers hung—and with preamble sweet

[1] Archibald McCullagh, D.D.

Of charming symphony, they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high;—
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part; such concord is in Heaven.[1]

Oh, what sweet company
We then shall hear and see!
What harmony will there abound,
When souls unnumbered sing
The praise of Zion's King,
Nor one dissenting voice is found!

With everlasting joy,
Such as will never cloy,
We shall be filled, nor wish for more;
Bright as meridian day,
Calm as the evening ray,
Full as a sea without a shore.[2]

The great tide swept me on. When upon earth had he [Beethoven] created sound like this? Where upon earth had we heard its like? What knew we of music, I say, who heard its earthly prototype? It was but the tuning of the instruments before the eternal orchestra shall sound. Soul, swing yourself free upon this mighty current. . . .

As the pæan rises, I bow my life to understand. What would he with us whom God chose to make Beethoven everlastingly? What is the burden of this master's message, given now in Heaven as once on earth? Do we read the score correctly?

"Holy—holy—"

[1] Milton. [2] Joseph Swain, 1792.

A chorus of angel-voices, trained since the time when morning stars sang together with the sons of God, take up the words:

"Holy, *holy*, HOLY is the Lord!"[1]

The God who reigns on high
The great Archangels sing,
And "Holy, holy, holy," cry,
"Almighty King!
Who was and is the same,
And evermore shall be!
Jehovah, Father, Great I Am,
We worship Thee!"

The music upon the closing day of special service of thanksgiving and triumph was held in what is known as the great amphitheatre of this City of God, —a vast area gently rising from the centre on every side, and surrounded by mountain slopes and peaks. And in reproducing the works of earthly and heavenly masters to illustrate the history of God's majestic movements in the earth, the chorus occupied the whole of this area below and above. And when the *Messiah* was rendered, the sky above was full of listening angels, who formed a canopy, rising like a radiant dome to a great height above the amphitheatre.[2]

And the vast throng of singers below, stretching from the ground up to the mountain-tops, was scarcely less impressive. For these were "the new-begotten from the dead" of earth, mingled with

[1] Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

[2] From *A Story of the Heavenly Camp-fires.*

many groups from other worlds, all in shining festival raiment, crowned and jewelled, their faces alight with joy and thanksgiving:

"Tier upon tier they rose and rose, and rose
So high that it was dreadful, flames with flames;
No man could number them, no tongue disclose
Their secret, sacred names." [1]

When the song rose fullest and sweetest, when, gradually, men, women, children, "angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven," were swept as one soul into the chorus,—then appeared the Lord Jesus in the midst, His glorified Humanity softening His Divine Majesty to our eyes, and beside Him, the Two!

No mortal words can paint that Vision! We rose to our feet with one accord; our heads bowed like a field of ripened grain before a strong wind; our hearts thrilled with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." [2]

There is a striking passage in the fourteenth chapter of Revelations where "a new song" before the Throne is spoken of. . . . This song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain: for Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation," is a song that only the saved can sing. Full of tenderness and pathos, thrilling in every note with the joy and rapture of escape and freedom, it falls in subdued cadence on the air of Heaven; and every angel stands still to

[1] Rev. ii., 17. [2] L. M. Wooster.

listen, entranced, while those who bear the image of the Lamb celebrate His cross and His blood, by which Heaven was opened to them.[1]

There 's a song the angels can never share
While the endless ages roll;
The song of one who has been redeemed,
The song of a ransomed soul:
Shall we sing it together, thou and I,
With the wondering angels standing by?
Shall we sing it there in the courts above—
The Heaven gained through redeeming love?[2]

Light, joy, peace, beauty, congenial society, delightful occupation and recreation,—all these may be predicated of the Heavenly City; and to them must be added, in and through all, the beginning and end of all, the very heart and soul of all,—love.[3]

For we cannot do more than love God; there is no higher duty, and there is no greater bliss. The true idea of Heaven must be that of love; the only question about it is the question of degree. God is Love Himself; and so far as we resemble Him we shall be love likewise; and as if to show that love is worship and worship is love, the inspired account of Heaven is that there shall be no temple there. Perfect love can adore and worship without signs and symbols; "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."[4]

[1] Burdett Hart, D.D.
[2] Anna J. Granniss.
[3] Leonard Mason.
[4] Bishop Anthony W. Thorold.

"Love will absorb us quite,
Love in the midst of light
On God's eternal love shall feed."

They who live that life of love now shall enter into the new City and find that it is not strange; just as we have felt when we came to some city of which we have read, or pictures of which we have seen,—"Why, I have been here before!" And yet, as day by day went on and we beheld new glories and new splendors of the city, we felt that we had had indeed a foretaste, we knew in some sense what to expect, but no expectation could begin to equal the realization of the glory and the splendor of the new land.[1]

Oh, none can tell thy bulwarks,
How gloriously they rise;
Oh, none can tell thy capitals
Of beautiful device;
Thy loveliness oppresses
All human thought and heart;
And none, O Peace, O Sion,
Can sing thee as thou art![2]

[1] Rev. Leighton Parks. [2] Saint Bernard.

The Beatific Vision

HEAVEN is most faire, but fairer He
That made that fairest canopie.

HERRICK.

O Crowns and Thrones and sapphires,
Ye glisten in the light!
Ye cannot flash too far your joy,
Ye cannot blaze too bright!
And some day God shall bid me dwell
Where the great visions shine,—
The sight of the Lord and all He is
Shall be the world's and mine.

REV. DENIS WORTMAN, D.D.

God Himself is the Country of the soul.

ST. AUGUSTINE.

XXIII

AFTER the resurrection has taken place, and the new heavens and the new earth have appeared; after sin has been extirpated and death destroyed, and Christ shall have gathered all His people into Heaven, one thing more remains to be done. Then the Lord Jesus will resign His mediatorial sceptre. . . . The end for which the mediatorial kingdom was established . . . having been attained, then Christ's mediatorial reign will cease, and God shall dwell and reign visibly in the midst of His people.[1]

Midst power that knows no limit,
And wisdom free from bound,
The Beatific Vision
Shall glad the saints around,—
The peace of all the faithful,
The calm of all the blest,
Inviolate, unvaried,
Divinest, sweetest, best.[2]

In our present life—so little capable are we of knowing, loving, and serving God—this may sound cold and unsatisfying, but dare we add to the Word of God, and for the sake of "comfort" turn to other and lower objects? Not till we "see God" shall we

[1] Archibald McCullagh, D.D. [2] Saint Bernard.

know Him, and till we know Him we cannot know how great may be the satisfaction found in loving Him.[1]

Though we may not be minded to say with Dante,

> "Thus happiness hath root
> In seeing, not in loving, which of sight
> Is aftergrowth,"

we may be sure that sight will greatly increase the love that has made but feeble root and growth in the soul while on earth. For sight is a most potent factor of knowledge and growth, as well as of delight.[2]

Think what boundless, what inexhaustible pleasure the eye affords in this life. How minute and penetrating is its power! How wide a range it can take! How it sweeps over and drinks in the beauties of this lower world! Yea, how it mounts up to the starry height and gathers in the brilliance of the host of heaven, darting as in a moment through the wide realms of space and visiting planets and stars whose distances baffle the powers of arithmetic! Such is the figure by which our Saviour would represent to us the enjoyment of God in glory! . . . "They shall see God." They shall see such a vision as neither the eye hath seen, nor the ear hath heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive it; a vision far transcending all earthly delights, surpassing the beauty of gold and silver, of forest and plain, of hill and valley, of sea and air, of sun and moon, surpassing the beauty of angels,[3]—

[1] Rev. R. E. Hutton. [2] Julia Wood.
[3] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.

that supreme moral beauty, of which all earthly beauty, all nature, all art, all poetry, all music, are but phantoms and parables, hints and hopes, dim reflected rays of the clear light of that everlasting day, of which it is written that "the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." [1]

Around Thee all is light,
And rest of perfect love,
And glory full and bright,
All human thought above:
Thyself the Fountain infinite
Of all ineffable delight.

O depth of holy bliss,
Essential and divine!—
What thought can measure this—
Thy joy, Thy glory—Thine!
Yet such our treasure evermore,
Thy fulness is Thy children's store.[2]

It is necessary to distinguish clearly what is meant by the Beatific Vision which is reserved for the final state, whereas it is again and again implied that the souls of the righteous realize the Divine Presence in Paradise. The Vision of God, which has been vouchsafed to men, and to which St. Paul looked when he spoke of departing and being "with the Lord," was that of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity; the First Person dwells, and will dwell, "in

[1] Charles Kingsley. [2] Frances R. Havergal.

the light which no man can approach unto, Whom no man hath seen or can see" until the full manifestation of His glory at the last great day.[1]

There can be no manner of doubt that the sight of Christ in His glorified humanity will in itself be a source of exceeding felicity to every soul that He has redeemed. Its cup of blessing will be filled to overflowing in His presence. It is probable that it could not bear anything more of glory and beauty while it is an inhabitant of Paradise. But as its powers expand, as it grows to the full height of its opportunities in that lower realm, it will eventually be prepared to enter upon the still greater joy that is dimly shadowed forth in the phrase "seeing God." We say "enter upon" advisedly. It is not likely that even spiritual eyes can endure at first more than a brief glimpse of that dazzling radiance. Only *by* the Vision will they be enabled to see more and more *of* the Vision. Only by looking at it will their power of taking it in be gradually increased; they will, as St. Paul says, "be themselves transformed into the same image from glory to glory,"—a continual advance, but never a complete attainment. God's glory will be growing upon them and into them to all eternity, as they are

> "In fearless love and hope uncloyed
> For ever on that ocean bright
> Empowered to gaze, and undestroyed
> Deeper and deeper plunge in light."

Nor is it likely that the word "seeing" is to be too

[1] Herbert M. Luckock, D.D.

strictly defined. Seeing relatives and friends in this life means something more than the mere sight of the eye; it means communion, impartation, affection. He who goes "to see" a king in his palace, either by invitation or permission, expects something more than merely to stand and gaze upon him. We may believe that He whom in the deepest sense, though He be the King of the universe, we are taught to call "Our Father," will have some gracious word, some special manifestation of His love, for each one of His children.

And in seeing Him thus, we shall surely "be satisfied." We shall have reached what we have been looking forward to, not in anxious longing but in contentful expectation, through our sojourn in His Garden, in the Paradise that engirts His palace, or in any other of the many mansions prepared for our reception. We shall be satisfied,—not because we have reached the culmination, but the realization of a bliss that can never end.[1]

Shall they be satisfied,—the soul's vague longing,
The aching void which nothing earthly fills?
Oh, what desires upon my soul are thronging
As I look upward to the heavenly hills![2]

To see Him is the final consummation of all. There is nothing more held out to man, as nothing higher could be. For this great vision our whole life is but a preparation. This is the end of creation, the end of redemption, the end of struggle and

[1] John Worden. [2] R. A. R.

victory. They to whom it is vouchsafed will have reached the greatest height and the most perfect bliss that any creature can attain.[1]

When we find ourselves after long rest gifted with fresh powers, vigorous with the seed of eternal life within us, able to love God as we wish, conscious that all trouble, sorrow, pain, anxiety, bereavement is over, blessed in the full affection of those earthly friends whom we loved so poorly and could protect so feebly while they were with us in the flesh,—and, above all, visited by the immediate, visible, ineffable presence of God Almighty, with His only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Co-equal, Co-eternal Spirit, that great sight which is the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore,—what deep, incommunicable, unimaginable thoughts then will be upon us! What secret harmonies awakened of which human nature seemed incapable! Earthly words are indeed all worthless to minister to such high anticipations. Let us close our eyes and keep silence.[2]

[1] William Maturin, [2] John, Cardinal Newman.

The Bridegroom and the Bride

He lifts me to the golden doors;
The flashes come and go;
All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strews her light below,
And deepens on and up! The gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The sabbaths of eternity,—
One sabbath deep and wide,—
A light upon the shining sea!
The Bridegroom with his Bride!

TENNYSON.

There Jesus shall embrace us,
'There Jesus be embraced,—
That spirit's food and sunshine,
Whence meaner love is chased.

SAINT BERNARD.

XXIV

WHILE we are living this earth-life, swayed by its influences, subject to its conditions, our minds are hampered by the flesh that enfolds us, our imagination is dominated by the things and customs that we see and know. It is probably as a concession to these our human limitations that Scripture uses the marriage relation to set forth the mystical union of Christ with His Church, the final blessedness of His people. The New Jerusalem, in the purity and beauty of white robes, in the splendor of crowns and jewels, is represented to us as "a bride adorned for her husband."

It is a highly significant and suggestive fact, for those who are joined together in wedlock, that no symbol more holy, more blessed, was to be found than this union, which makes two beings one in interest, in aim, in affection. It is a symbol that awes even while it partially enlightens us. It is a "mystery of light"; we know instinctively that its full meaning is beyond our present understanding, and will only be plain to us when the symbol is exchanged for and interpreted by the reality. Yet, the symbol being given to us for our instruction, it is our bounden duty and pleasure reverently to make what we can of it.[1]

[1] Martin Worth.

Perhaps it would not be too much to say that Heaven itself is marriage. It is one vast union of souls with God. The new heaven and the new earth will at last meet and know themselves one,—that will be the bridal day of eternity.[1]

The Bridegroom met the Bride alone. Himself,
In glorified humanity supreme,
Incarnate Light: and she like Him in glory,
No spot nor wrinkle on her holy brow,
No film upon her robes of dazzling white,
Most beautiful, most glorious: every saint
Perfect in individual perfectness;
And each to each so fitly interlinked,
Joined and compact, their countless millions seemed
One body by one spirit inspired and moved,—
The various members knit in faultless grace,
The feeblest as the strongest necessary,
No schism, nor discord, nor excess, nor lack.[2]

Glory touched glory on each bended head,
Hands locked dear hands never to sunder more:
These were the new-begotten from the dead
Whom the great Birthday bore.

Heart answered heart, soul answered soul at rest,
Double against each other, filled, sufficed;
All loving, loved of all; but loving best
And best beloved of Christ.[3]

[1] Lucy Larcom. [2] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.
[3] Christina G. Rossetti.

The Bridegroom led His own, His only Bride,
Into His Father's presence, His and ours.
Were they the parted wings of cherubim,
Or opening clouds of glory which disclosed
Such lineaments of love unutterable,
Attempered as the soul of each could bear? [1]

At the thought of this moment,—when the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are revealed in all the lustre of their Divinity that finite sight can bear; when the Bridegroom shows all His love for His chosen Bride, the Holy Church triumphant; when the bond of their eternal union is solemnly acknowledged and blessed before all worlds; when an ocean of joy floods all hearts, and peace flows as a river,—at this moment of moments what can any human imagination do but bend its knee and veil its face, and be still! [2]

Look onwards! Hush!—the Marriage is complete;
The Banquet is prepared, the virgins meet;
The angels' snowy, opal-tinted wings
Are folded, and the harpers hush their strings,
As stands the Bridegroom, Conqueror, King, and Priest,
To pour His benediction on the feast! [3]

"When to the last great Supper
The faithful shall come in,"

no want of guests will there be. We hear of festivities on earth where thousands assemble, we read of

[1] Bishop E. H. Bickersteth.
[2] L. M. Wooster.
[3] Caroline M. Noel.

millions in the army of Xerxes, but the greatest throngs that ever gathered are only the small dust of the balance to that host which "shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Notwithstanding, however, the vastness of that assemblage, individuality is unimpaired. . . . No one will be merged in another. The number there is not greater than the variety of character and experience. All harmonizing, each has a tone of his own in the "song of Moses and the Lamb." [1]

Even at that wonderful banquet, where the guests are the angels and archangels, thrones, principalities, and powers, and the inhabitants of the universe; when the Lord shall drink with His Bride and His guests of the "new wine" of perfect love and bliss; when every heart will beat as one in perfect sympathy, even there each one of us will stand out clear and unmistakable in his or her own individual character, attainments, and spirit.[2]

There will be witness of God for each one of us to bear,—some witness, I believe, which no other soul in all the universe could bear but we. The heavens will be telling the glory of God for ever, and though our star may be undistinguishable, somewhere in all the flood of radiance shall be the light it sheds,—a witness special and different in color from all the others which are reflecting that Light which is to lighten every saint.[3]

And what will be the memories of that moment! For every present grows out of a past, and few will be there whose joy will not be intensified by remem-

[1] Rev. Augustus C. Thompson. [2] L. M. [3] Phillips Brooks.

bering from what strange, contrasting past this wonderful present grew.[1]

The Bride, adoring, thinks upon that hour
Ere her Lord gave Himself to Death's dark power,
When at that Passover He lifted up
His eyes to heaven, and having given the cup,
He said: "O Father, I Thy work have done;
Into Thy glory now recall Thy Son:
I will that she I ransom, as My Bride
Be with Me in My glory at Thy side."
And the strong might of that prevailing prayer
Has brought her to His throne and glory there.
Uplift the trumpets! wake the harp-strings now,
And let the voice of many waters flow![2]

As the voice of many waters, all saints sing as one,
  As the voice of an unclouded thundering;
Unswayed by the changing moon and unswayed by the sun,
  As the voice of many waters, all saints sing.

Circling round the rainbow of their perfect ring,
  Twelve thousand times twelve thousand voices in unison
Swell the triumph, swell the praise of Christ the King.

Where raiment is white of blood-steeped linen slowly spun,
  Where crowns are golden of Love's own largessing,

[1] Leonard Mason. [2] Caroline M. Noel.

Where eternally the ecstasy is but begun,
As the voice of many waters all saints sing.[1]

Jesus, the Gem of Beauty,
True God and Man they sing,
The never-failing Garden,
The ever-golden Ring,
The Door, the Pledge, the Husband,
The Guardian of His court,
The Day-star of Salvation,
The Porter and the Port. . . .
O Bride that know'st no guile,
. . . . . .
Unfading lilies, bracelets
Of living pearl thine own,—
The Lamb is ever near thee,
The Bridegroom thine alone.
The Crown He is to guerdon,
The Buckler to protect,
And He Himself the Mansion,
And He the Architect.
The only art thou needest,
Thanksgiving for thy lot;
The only joy thou seekest
The Life where Death is not. . . .
Then all the halls of Sion
For aye shall be complete,
And in the Land of Beauty
All things of beauty meet.[2]

[1] Christina G. Rossetti. [2] Saint Bernard, 1153.

For Ever and For Ever

Behind, before ye, shines Eternity,
Visible as the vault's fathomless blue,
Which is so deep the glance goes never through,
Though nothing stays save depth.

Sir Edwin Arnold.

Dome up, O heaven, yet higher o'er my head!
Back, back, horizon, widen out my world!
Rush in, O infinite sea of the unknown!

George Macdonald.

The spiritual life is great and clear,
And self-continuous as a changeless sea,
Rolling the same in every age as now.

James Philip Bailey.

Thou hast no shore, fair ocean!
Thou hast no time, bright day!

Saint Bernard.

XXV

Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy race;
Call on the lazy, leaden-stepping hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace,
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,—
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain!
For when as each thing bad thou has entombed,
And last of all thy greedy self consumed,
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss,
And joy shall overtake us like a flood.[1]

I am a being of eternity,—yet this is a mysterious truth to me, half revealed and half concealed. I do not know exactly what eternity means. I know I am in it and of it, yet I am also a creature of time. I cannot even conceive of a state when time and space shall be no more. Yet such a state I shall know. I shall know what it is to have "life fully possessed." Think, O my soul, there will be unimagined wonders.[2]

If gratitude our speech benumb,
And joy our laughter quell,

[1] Milton.

[2] Rev. W. J. Knox-Little.

May not eternity be dumb
With things too good to tell?[1]

There are people who look a little askance at the idea of eternal life, because they fear that after innumerable ages it may become monotonous. But think!—does this life ever become monotonous to those who are all the time working, learning, and growing? Does the artist ever grow weary of painting, or the musician of composing, or the singer of singing, as long as his powers are not only unimpaired, but steadily expanding? Even men of business get to be so enamored of their business as to be restless, lost without it. Life never becomes monotonous, uninteresting, to those who are worthily and congenially employed. In the future life, with enlarged, possibly with additional, faculties, and with endless opportunity for their exercise and expansion, is it not likely that there will be continual joy, ever satisfied yet ever renewed, in using and improving them?

For it is not to be supposed that the finite creature will leap suddenly to the perfection of its powers there, but rather that it will be a gradual growth as here. Moreover, it is strongly to be supposed that the Infinite will always be far enough in advance of the finite to keep the latter always eager to learn more of Him and His works, and to understand them better.[2]

Eternity is not too much for the study of the thoughts and works of the Eternal.[3]

[1] George Macdonald. [2] John Worden. [3] Henri Amiel.

Yet the Infinite is He
In His wisdom and His might;
And it needs eternity
To reveal His love and light
To the finite and created:
Archangelic mind and heart
Never with His bliss was sated,
Never knew the thousandth part
Of the all-mysterious rays
Flowing from Essential Light,
Hiding in approachless blaze
God Himself, the Infinite.
Infinite the ocean-joy
Opening to His children's view;
Infinite their varied treasure
Meted not by mortal measure,—
Holy knowledge, holy pleasure,
Through eternity's great leisure,
Like its praises, ever new.[1]

Our highest blessedness it is that we have immortal needs,—needs which require eternity for their fulfilment. Eternally we shall need to be taken deeper into the unfathomable heart of God, that we may learn to love as He loves. Eternally we shall need to pray the lofty prayer of Christ, "Thy will be done!" for eternally the mysteries of that will—which is indeed God Himself, His character, His personality—will rise as mountain-tops above us, yet as heights towards which we must ever ascend to breathe our native air.[2]

[1] Frances R. Havergal.

[2] Lucy Larcom.

It is only true to a certain point to say that the day of faith and hope will be over, because they are swallowed up in sight. Faith and hope, like charity, are among the things which will "abide" even when the saints know as they are known, because there will always remain an infinity of blessed experience to be drawn from the inexhaustible Fount of Goodness; and as age passes after age, it will seem to the redeemed as if they were only just beginning to appreciate the glory of God, and only just beginning to be capable of appreciating it.[1]

Ah! on the brink
Of each new age of great eternity, I think,
After the ages have all countless grown,
Our souls will poise and launch with eager wing,
Forgetting blessedness already known
In sweet impatience for God's next new thing![2]

We may be quite sure that there will always be some "next new thing," some new understanding of God's purposes, some new treasure from His vast, unwasting storehouse, to excite our wonder and renew our love. For the Infinite can neither be wasted nor exhausted.[3]

In many forms we try
To utter God's immensity;
But the boundless hath no form,
And the universal Friend
Doth as far transcend
An angel as a worm.[4]

[1] A. J. Mason.
[2] Helen Hunt Jackson.
[3] Justin L. Mather.
[4] Emerson.

And yet eternity, incomprehensible as it sometimes seems, and is, is more comprehensible than its opposite. That all this life, this intelligence, these feelings and affections, these forces and finenesses, this nature, with its beauty and adaptability,—that all these should come to an end, should come to nothing,—*that* is the incomprehensible thing, *that* the mind utterly refuses to accept. Beside that void and nothingness, eternity becomes possible; in fact, it is the only solution of an otherwise insoluble problem. The mind opens to it as a flower to the sunlight.[1]

Eternity to be, and be, and be,
Ever beginning, never ending still,
Still undiminished, far as thought can see,—
Farther than thought can see, by dint of will
Strung up and strained and shooting like a star
Past utmost bound of everlasting hill,—
Eternity unswaddled, without bar,
Finishing sequence in its awful sum;
Eternity still rolling forth its car,
Eternity still here and still to come![2]

There we shall rest and see; we shall see and love; we shall love and praise. Behold what shall be in the end without end! For what other end is our end but to come to that kingdom of which there is no end?[3]

[1] Louis M. Woodford. [2] Christina G. Rossetti.
[3] St. Augustine.

L'Envoi

As one who from a dream awakened, straight
All he hath seen forgets, yet still retains
Impression of the feeling in his dream;
E'en such am I,— . . .
. . . and yet the sense of sweet
That sprang from it still trickles in my heart.

DANTE.

What is left for us save in growth of soul to rise,
From the gift looking to the giver,
And from the cistern to the river,
And from the finite to Infinity,
And from man's dust to God's Divinity?

ROBERT BROWNING.

O God, who hast prepared for those who love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love for Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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